



THE  
TRAGEDY  
OF THE  
CAESARS

S. BARING GOULD.



IN MEMORY OF  
PROF. JONATHAN STANTON



*The*  
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THE TRAGEDY OF THE CAESARS









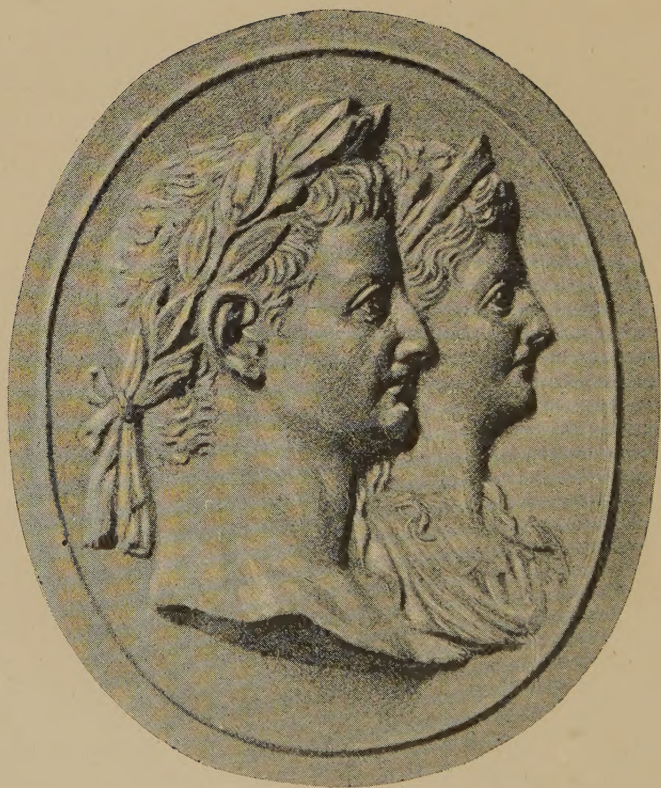


FIG. 71.—TIBERIUS AND LIVIA.—Engraved Gem at Florence.

[Frontispiece.]



# THE TRAGEDY OF THE CAESARS

A STUDY OF THE CHARACTERS  
OF THE CAESARS OF THE JULIAN  
AND CLAUDIAN HOUSES

BY S. <sup>about</sup>BARING-GOULD, M.A.

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'OLD COUNTRY LIFE,' ETC., ETC.



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# THE TRAGEDY OF THE CAESARS

A STUDY OF THE CAESARS  
OF THE CAESARS OF THE CAESARS  
AND CAESARS OF THE CAESARS

BY J. B. BARNES, D.D.

NEW YORK: THE CAESARS OF THE CAESARS  
OLD COUNTRY, NEW YORK



5

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DEDICATED TO  
MY WIFE  
ON OUR SILVER WEDDING  
PROV. XXXI. 10, 11





## ON ROMAN PORTRAITURE

HAVING been obliged by lack of health to spend two consecutive winters in Italy, I found my attention arrested, and then engrossed, by the collections of portrait-busts of the ancient Romans in the various Museums.

The human face has exercised on me, from boyhood, a peculiar fascination. I have loved to find in the lineaments the hieroglyph of the mind within, and in the expression the revelation of the moral character. When I have come to know intimately one whose face I have thus explored, it has been instructive to compare the man as I have found him with the man I imagined him, to correct errors in interpretation and supplement deficiencies in observation.

It was accordingly inevitable that I should be riveted by these Roman historic busts.

I found, however, that in this study it was necessary to be on one's guard, for, in the first place, a good deal of attribution is arbitrary, and cannot be justified. In the second place, all busts that are rightly attributed are not of equal value. In the third place, all the busts are not genuine antiques.

I. A good deal of the attribution has been capricious. For instance, in the Vatican are two fine busts, placed side by side, obviously representing the same man at different periods of his life; one is catalogued as C. Marius, the other as Munatius Plancus. On examination of the reasons for so designating the latter, we find that it has been thought to bear a strong resemblance to a medal bearing the profile of Munatius Plancus, which medal, however, proves to be a forgery.

Again, in the Capitoline Museum is the famous Agrippina Seduta, a noble statue of a Roman matron seated. Believing it to be Agrippina the Elder, one contemplates the stately countenance with interest and respect. But presently the practised eye discovers that the head-dress belongs to the period of the Antonines, and that therefore the figure must represent some lady who lived a century after the death of the wife of Germanicus. At Naples an unmistakable Claudius is labelled Galba, and in the Vatican an Octavius is pointed out as Caligula.

Consequently, the first thing a student has to do who is studying Roman iconography is to establish certain canons by which to determine the attribution of the portraits.

The first of these is the comparison of the profiles of the busts with those on the medals. But even here one does not stand on firm ground, for the medals do not always agree among themselves, nor are they always certainly accurate in portraiture. For instance, let any one compare the profiles of Julius Caesar on the coins, and he will see how variable is the type. Again, a good many medals were struck in honour of Livia, but almost certainly, in the majority of cases, no portrait was attempted—an ideal Greek face was given.

The next of these is the occurrence of an inscription, either on the statue or found near it, which can assure one that this figure does represent a certain person named. Unhappily such cases are most rare. The Agrippina Minor in the Lateran can be thus fixed with certainty, and by that the attribution of other statues and busts must be tested. In the Museums of Rome, Florence, Naples, there are fine heads catalogued as Seneca, but all certainly wrongly, for a Hermes exists at Berlin inscribed Seneca on one side, of a totally different type. So with the Ciceros in the Museums. They stand or fall according as they agree with the inscribed bust at Madrid.

The next canon is founded on family likeness. The Claudian family had a strong family resemblance, and by observing this we can pick out a certain group of busts, and say that these had Claudians as their prototypes, though we cannot always say which of the family each bust represents. M. Vipsanius Agrippa had a remarkable frown. This frown is found in the bust of Agrippina, his daughter, in the Vatican, and on the countenance of Caius, his grandson. A remarkable asymmetry existed in the eyes of the Julian house, and this can be traced down to Caius. It is lost in Nero.

Another canon, again, is the date of the sculpture, or of the arrangement of the hair. The finest and purest work belongs to the last age of the Republic and the first of Imperialism. After that the character of the sculpture declines. In female busts the mode of wearing the hair fixes the date approximately.

To arrive with anything approaching to certainty as to the correctness of the attribution of the busts, all those of each several individual should be copied by photography and brought to one standard scale, and so compared. But this, unhappily, cannot now be done. And, secondly, each bust should have accurate measures taken of every part of the face and skull, and these should be compared. This, also, cannot be done now. Curators, very naturally, do not like to have a pair of compasses applied to a choice bust.

II. In the second place, all busts are not of equal value. Some are from life, others are mere stock pieces done to order; those who ordered an imperial bust were sometimes indifferent about having a piece of accurate portraiture, and the artist took no interest in his work. The cities in the Roman world thought it incumbent on them

to set up statues of the reigning Caesar, private individuals did the same, and reigning Caesars were turned out of the *ateliers* in scores, as are crucifixes and Madonnas now from the workshops of Ammergau. Such is the colossal head of Julius Caesar at Naples, clearly done by a sculptor who had never seen his model, and who did his work in a perfunctory manner. Of another quality are the busts of Caesar in the British Museum and in the Louvre, both by men who had studied the great commander, and loved him. It is not really difficult to the experienced eye to distinguish between the work of a sculptor who had studied the living model and that of the workman who knocked out a typical head that passed for a Tiberius or a Nero, and who had not a chance of observing the original.

III. A third point to be considered is the genuineness of a bust. At the period of the Renaissance a fashion set in for having portrait-busts of the Romans of ancient times, and many were then turned out by the master sculptors of that age. There has also been, since the middle of last century, a manufacture of false antiques in this branch as well as in others. Modern imitations are easily detected. No one with a trained eye can fail to detect any of the Campana forgeries in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, and in the Louvre. The late Prince Torlonia employed two good Italian artists to complete the defective statues in his great collection. Their work can be picked out at a glance. But the Renaissance sculpture was of a very different order. There is no finer head in the Capitoline Museum among the imperial busts than that of Nerva, and yet almost without a doubt it is the work of some sculptor of the sixteenth century.

In general the same rule applies to the false antiques as to the genuine third-rate antiques. They tell their own tale to the trained critic, and say that they are not from life; they follow a conventional type, but are not actual studies. In one or two cases where possibly we have Renaissance work, this is so close a copy of first-rate ancient statuary that the busts retain their value in portraiture. When there is a question as to the value of a piece of sculpture as a study from life, the proper method is to submit what is doubtful to the trained sculptor's judgment. Here I may mention my deep gratitude to Mr. Conrad Dressler, the talented sculptor, to whom I have submitted the drawings and photographs I have collected, and whose critical acumen is of the highest order.

Now a word or two relative to the history of Roman portraiture. The Romans in all probability derived their passion for it from the Etruscans, who modelled their gods and representations of living men and women in clay. Pliny speaks of the old Roman images as in terra-cotta, and says that they were painted. The standard, artistically speaking, attained by the Etruscan workmen was not high, and yet there was a certain skilfulness shown in fixing the features, though they

had not acquired the skill to catch an expression. A good number of the Etruscan terra-cotta portraits from tombs still exist.



FIG. 1.—Etruscan Statuary in terra-cotta from Caere, in the Louvre.

The method of taking a cast of the human face was well understood, and Pliny says that sculptors liked to have these casts to work from. Such casts were, however, mere rough guides, and were by no means servilely copied, even in the terra-cotta figures, much less so in works of marble and bronze. The muscles of eyes and mouth are not contracted as would be those of a man submitting to have his face encased in clay. These casts served their purpose as a help to the artist to work from when his model was not sitting, much as a photograph now assists a portrait-painter.

But the Roman nobility who had the *jus imaginum*, *i.e.* the right to have ancestral portraits, were not content with fictile busts; they had masks made in wax of the faces of members of the family, whether taken from the actual cast or from the bust made by the artist we do not now know; these were coloured, and were used for a double purpose. In the hall or atrium of a noble house, the family tree was painted against the wall, and in each escutcheon, where we should put a name, there a Roman patrician set up the wax face of his ancestor in a case. These portraits were united by filaments, indicative of relationship and descent.<sup>1</sup> On festivals the boxes were opened, and the heads adorned with leaves and flowers. Under each mask or bust was a tablet, *titulus*, on which the offices held by the ancestor were inscribed.

<sup>1</sup> Plin. *Hist. Nat.* xxxv. 6: 'Stemmata vero lineis discurrebant ad imagines pictas.'



At a uneral these wax masks were taken down, slaves or clients were dressed up in appropriate costumes, and the wax masks applied to their faces. Then they marched ahead of the deceased in long train, to represent the ancestors conducting the dead man to his final home.

At the funeral of Julius Caesar a wax representation of the deceased figured, moved by mechanism.

Dio Cassius, in his account of the funeral of Augustus, says that his wax image was there in triumphal garb. A golden bust was there as well, and a third headed the procession in a chariot, followed by a long-drawn procession of ancestors, Julius Caesar alone excluded, as he had been deified, and it was improper to carry in the train the image of a god. The line of 'forebears' led from Romulus, whose portrait was, of course, imaginary. Pompeius the Great was included, as akin through his marriage with Caesar's daughter.

Tacitus mentions as a matter of regret that at the funeral of Germanicus at Antioch the images of the ancestors could not be borne, because they were in the mansion at Rome. He relates how that at the obsequies of Junia, wife of C. Cassius, the images of twenty of the most illustrious families in Rome preceded the corpse, but the busts of Brutus and Cassius, the tyrannicides, were conspicuous by their absence.

At the funeral of Drusus, son of Tiberius, the corpse was preceded by the statues and busts of ancestors, real and fictitious, from Aeneas, the kings of Alba, Romulus, and all the great men of the Claudian family, 'displayed in long train.'

At a funefal in a noble family Pliny the Elder says (xxxv. 6) that the whole ancestry of the deceased attended. Cicero charged Sextus Clodius with showing indignity to the corpse of Publius Clodius in refusing it the ancestral images.

Cicero and Varro both refer to the early portraits preserved in noble mansions, as having long hair, and beards. The first barbers appeared in Italy B.C. 300, and perhaps it took half a century for the fashion for shaving to prevail. Consequently these bearded family portraits dated from before B.C. 250. They must have been tolerably common, from the way in which they are alluded to.

From fictile busts and statues to those cast in metal was no long stride; sculpture in marble was probably of Greek importation, and the fashion for having marble sculpture drove out that for terra-cotta. In the Capitoline Museum is a bronze statue, bearded, that is thought, for no good reason, to represent L. Brutus, who expelled the kings. It does not belong to the post-Hadrian period, when the beard was allowed to grow, and it is probably a reproduction in bronze of some bearded ancestor of a noble house. At Naples is a marble head of another bearded man, at St. Petersburg another, another at Holkham Hall.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Michaelis believes this to be a modern antique.

These are reproductions in statuary marble of ancestors who were formerly represented in the hall by terra-cotta heads or wax masks. Where no genuine portraits existed, imaginary likenesses were contrived. Thus the Julian family, which pretended to derive from Aeneas on one side, and the Alban kings on the other, as we have seen, at their funerals produced the portraits of these mythical ancestors, much as in Holyrood there are ranges of pictures of the ancient kings of Scotland.

As the wax faces were coloured, hair, eyes, lips, cheeks, after life, so undoubtedly were the marble busts. Indeed, the painting of busts was carried to a high condition of perfection, and Pliny complains that in his time the senseless love of display among the wealthy Romans led them to prefer to have their heads cast in precious metals, to the loss of one-half of their value in portraiture, inasmuch as by this means colour was discarded. Cicero declares in his invective against L. Piso that he resembled his ancestors' busts in naught save colour. The poets, moralists and satirists, ridiculed the false pride of families that boasted of their ranges of portraits. Tibullus (iv. 1) praises Messala in that he strove to be great in himself, and was not content with these evidences of family importance. Juvenal (viii. 1), sneering at pride of race, asks what value is there in pedigrees and rows of painted portraiture. Seneca (*Ep.* xlv.) says: 'In virtue lies true nobility. A stately hall crowded with illustrious portraits does not make a noble. A noble mind alone does that.' And in his *De Beneficiis* (iii. 28) he declares that all men have one origin, and that a man's conduct is what really ennobles him. 'Those who expose the family images in the hall, with the names in long order, and with plenty of lines of connection linking the branches of the family, all displayed in the principal place in the house, such are rather to be termed notables than nobles.' On the other hand, Valerius Maximus (v. 8. 3) speaks of the advantage to a man to be surrounded by ancestral images when they speak of honourable deeds done and services rendered to the State.

The custom of hanging up medallion portraits in the temples was introduced by Appius Claudius in B.C. 495. Attached to the escutcheon, on which was the head of the great man, was, in later times, 'a swarm of little medallions representing his children.' Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, B.C. 78, adorned the Basilica Aemilia with escutcheon portraits of his family, as well as his own mansion. These disks (*clypei imaginum*) almost certainly gave profiles only.

Pliny speaks of a work published by M. Varro, born B.C. 116, in which he gave biographies of seven hundred eminent men, accompanied by their portraits, thus immortalising not merely their virtues but their likenesses. The passage is a very curious one. We cannot suppose that these were hand-painted or sketched portraits, but that rather each copy of the book was issued with a case of casts representing those whose biographies were given.

In addition to sculpture and cast for portraiture, recourse was had to painting, and of the skill with which portraits were executed by Greek artists of the imperial age we have, happily, some examples in the British Museum from Naucratis.

Nero had a portrait of himself painted on canvas 120 feet high that was struck by lightning as soon as completed. One of his freedmen gave a spectacle of gladiators at Antium, and in the portico, on canvas, were the likenesses of the combatants and their attendants. We can judge what this was like by the great mosaic in the Lateran, brought from the Baths of Caracalla, on which are the portraits of famous gladiators, repulsive in their fidelity to life.

Only such families as were illustrious through holding offices in the State had the *jus imaginum*, the right to a gallery of family portraits; and apparently only such members of the race as had attained to civil and military distinction were represented. The ladies probably were not in the first period modelled and their faces set out at all, nor the youthful members of the family. The right to have family statuary and wax masks belonged, apparently, at first solely to the patrician houses, and only such portraits were permitted as represented those who had held office in the State. Later, the right was extended to plebeian houses, with the same limitation. When Cicero entered on his aedileship, he acquired at once the use of the ivory curule chair, and the right to have his portrait set up in his hall. This right of being represented in portraiture was, in fact, the heraldic emblazonment of ancient Rome. A Roman family was as proud of the number of busts of ancestors, all office-holders, which it could show, as an English family now is of the quarterings on its shield. That the portraits of ladies were not set up in the halls or exhibited in public at the period of the fall of the Republic is almost certain.<sup>1</sup> Ladies of rank had a right to exhibit the portraits of their ancestors, but no evidence is extant to show that any ancestress was represented,<sup>2</sup> or that they had themselves a right to be modelled. Great hesitation seems to have been felt about introducing their likenesses on coins. Only when Livia appears conjointly with her husband or her son does her profile bear tokens of portraiture. Coins struck in her honour bear ideal heads of Salus Augusta, Pietas, or Justitia. The sole exception is a most doubtful one. On the medal of Fulvia, the masculine wife, first of P. Clodius, then of Scribonius Curio, lastly of Marc Antony, there is a head which would serve very well for her portrait; but whether it is a portrait is questionable. Pallas and Roma figure in the medals of the Fulvian gens.

A certain amount of control was exercised over the portraits in a

<sup>1</sup> Unless erected by decree of the senate, as was that of Claudia Quinta in the vestibule of the Temple of Cybele.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero in *Vat.* ii. says that on the condemnation of C. Antonius his family portraits, 'imagines patris et fratris sui,' went with his niece to the house of her husband Vatinius, which Cicero calls a consignment to prison.

family gallery. It was penal to retain that of a man who had fallen into disgrace, and whose name had been scored out of the Acts. Sulla made it illegal to have one of Caius Marius, and Julius Caesar violated the law, not only by exhibiting the face of his uncle at the funeral of his aunt, but also by retaining it in the family collection. It was a dangerous matter at one time for any nobleman to harbour among his family portraits one of C. Cassius or of M. Brutus. When the populace on the fall of a favourite threw down his statues exposed in public, it was in token that they demanded the removal as well of such as were reserved in the halls of his kindred.

The erection of statues in public was general in the latter days of the Republic. We cannot quite credit Livy and Pliny when they tell us that there were statues of Horatius Cocles, of Attus Navius, and of the three sibyls in the Forum at the time of the kings. Pliny tells us that Spurius Cassius erected a bronze statue of himself in the Forum about B.C. 486. In the period between the Decemviri and the burning of Rome by the Gauls, there is mention of the erection of statues of Minucius, *prefectus equitum*, of Ahala, and of the four Roman ambassadors who were put to death by the inhabitants of Fidenae. From the year B.C. 426 nearly a century passes without record of the setting up of public statues, but after that they became tolerably frequent.

The fact of the original portraits being casts made from moulds of the actual face no doubt gave to the Romans their liking for fidelity in portraiture. Idealisation was not carried to any great extent; it was, however, permitted where a Caesar or an Augusta was invested with divine attributes—hardly otherwise.

Many of the busts we possess were originally intended for statues. This we know from the angular finish of the neck below, fashioned to be adjusted to a figure in toga. Comparatively few statues have heads and bodies in one piece, unless nude; and in a draped or harnessed statue we can rarely be sure that the head belongs to the trunk. Caius knocked off the heads of many fine statues to replace them with his own likeness; and, possibly enough, in many cities the inhabitants accommodated themselves thus to circumstances. Instead of ordering a new statue of the new prince on a change of head to the State, they simply ordered a new head and put it on the already existing statue. So also with private individuals.<sup>1</sup>

Again, we cannot always depend on the shapes of the skulls being alike in portraits of the same individual. Busts that were intended to stand against a wall, or in shallow niches, had the posterior portion of the head reduced. Of this there are some conspicuous examples in the Vatican. So also the piece of stone sculptured sometimes determined the cranial form. This is the case with the basalt head of Julius Caesar at Berlin. The block employed did not allow of the shape being given

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* i. 74.



to the head that was really proper to it. In the two cameo profiles of Maecenas, the exigencies of the shape of the sardonix have made the engravers sacrifice truth. So long as the faces were like, they thought little of the shape of the skull.

I will here quote the opinion of Mr. Dressler on Roman portraiture : 'There are works of art which bear on their face the impress of truth. Of these I think we can feel in little doubt. Others are inferior works, mere copies. Of these latter one can only pronounce with hesitation whether the originals were done from the life. One can generally judge whether a real portrait from life is done after a few or many sittings. But, then, a laborious study from life may itself be a very poor thing. Again, an admirable portrait may be taken without a sitting; but there is always present some evidence in the detail that reveals when it has been done with a sitter; there is a more searching realism, a closer adherence to natural forms, and a departure from conventionalisms.

'But, again, after holding for a long time the opinion that it was impossible to do any good work away from Nature, I have come to see that this is a fallacy, and that, perhaps, it is only when away from your model that you have power and freedom to sum up his qualities and his defects, to see him as a whole and in proper perspective, and to interpret your final and complete impressions in a form which bears the stamp of finality. One thing alone is indispensable, and that is that the artist should have got himself full of his subject, at its very source, in his presence and company, and under the influence of his acts and words, before he begins to pour it forth, as it were, in bust or statue. In this consists the beauty of the Roman portraiture in many cases: we have the clearest evidence of the direct, personal impress of the individual represented; *sa griffe*, as the French say, is upon the work. Such, I think, is the case with the British Museum bust of Julius Caesar. It seems carved just as Julius Caesar would write and speak, just as he would have carved it himself had he been a sculptor. The decisive energy, the firmness, the elevation of the man are there, and have forced themselves into the style of the artist.

'Much of this transfusion of the spirit of one into the other, I am convinced, is to be found in all great works of portraiture; and what is more, it takes place without the presence of the sitter himself; of that also I am convinced. But it is so only when the artist is of so receptive a nature that he can be filled with his subject, when he has the due qualities of memory and discrimination; the one to retain his materials until the time comes for using them; the other to arrange them in the manner which most truly represents his sitter.

'To sum up: I think that the strongest evidence in favour of the truthfulness of a portrait-bust is the impression of truth it makes on the intelligent and trained onlooker; and I think that evidences of

detail, showing as they do a realism that indicates that sittings were given, may lead one to prefer mistakenly the inferior work to one that is really greater and truer.'

For a catalogue of portrait statues, busts, and gems from the Republican age to Nero, there is no work comparable with Bernoulli's *Römische Ikonographie* (Stuttgart, 1881-86).

E. Q. Visconti's great work, *Iconographie romaine* (1817), was interrupted by his death before he had reached the imperial epoch. It was completed by the Chevalier Mongez in 1829, but many busts have been discovered since that date, and his criticism leaves much to be desired. A new work is advertised, *Griechische und Römische Porträts*, by H. Brunn and P. Arndt (München, 1891), but the first number has not yet appeared. No satisfactory and final conclusions can be arrived at, except on the lines already indicated, of reduction to scale and accurate measurements. For this reason I cannot claim for this work to be more than an iconographic essay. Of many busts I could obtain no photographs, or none that gave the profiles, and it is not possible to carry with one so exact a recollection of a face in one museum as to be able to compare with it a face seen in another museum, perhaps not on the same day. I employed an Italian artist to draw me the profiles, but his work was not satisfactory, and no artist's drawing can be as accurate as the portrait drawn by the sun.

*Lastly*, As to the story of the Caesars to the extinction of the Julian-Claudian race: no tragedy, to my mind, is comparable to it for dramatic force and pathos; no novel of more human interest, or of more thrilling incident. The story is in all Histories of Rome somewhat obscured, because in history the political and military events of the period claim paramount attention.

With the faces of the Caesarian house before me, I thought of the men and women themselves, their individual lives, their characters, their sorrows, their joys, their trials, and their triumphs. I, so to speak, lived among them for two winters, spending day after day looking into their faces, comparing them, and I felt as though I had made a personal acquaintance with them, and had come to understand them in a way none could apart from these galleries of speaking likenesses. To read Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio in England, and to read them looking up into the eyes of those whose acts are recorded, are two very different things. It seemed to me that the study of those faces helped me to understand the characters and personal histories of these Julians and Claudians in a way impossible apart from them, and that it enabled me to correct many a partial judgment and explain many a psychological puzzle.

When first I wrote this story of the Caesars, I crowded my pages with references to authorities for every particular advanced, and then took a pair of shears and cut them all, or nearly all, away. Every student

knows where to look for the authorities, and whereabouts in these authorities to find what I have quoted. When I write about the Fall of Sejanus, he knows, without a reference, that he must look at Dio and not Tacitus, and turn to Juvenal's Tenth Satire. If I tell him that Tiberius liked Brussels sprouts, and sent to Germany for parsnips, he knows without being told that he must go to Pliny for this. The general reader is teased by a page speckled with numbers, and damped by seeing the foot as thick with references as is a ship's keel with barnacles. I do not wish my reader to misunderstand my purpose. This book is not a history of the Roman world, or of the Roman state, but is purely biographical. If in the stories of Julius Caesar and Augustus I have had to enter into the constitutional changes that were effected, it is because, without understanding the political conditions at the time, these two men themselves cannot be understood. But, as a rule, I do not desire to follow the ripples produced by the stone, and point out how far they extended, but to describe the nature of the stone itself. Thus I have said nothing about the Gallic wars of Caesar, of the invasion of Britain, nothing about the struggles on the Armenian frontier with the Parthians, but have noted that Julius Caesar ate rancid oil without making a face over it, and that Agrippina the Younger had a pet white nightingale; that Augustus every day kissed the little bust of a lost grandchild, that Tiberius scolded Drusus for disdaining cabbage; and that Germanicus could not endure to hear a cock crow.

As I have spared the ordinary reader references, he must take my word for it that, in the words of Montaigne, 'in the examples which I here bring in of what I have read, I have forbidden myself to dare to alter even the most light and indifferent circumstances; my conscience does not falsify one tittle; what my ignorance may do I cannot say.'

One disadvantage I have had to contend with or surmount is, that of Julius Caesar and Octavius admirable and exhaustive histories have been written, into which almost every available biographical detail has been taken up. This is not the case with the Caesars that follow. Consequently I have to begin by going over ground that has been well trodden, before I reach soil less trampled. As all writers of the history of this period must go to the few available original authorities, I have not scrupled here and there to extract from them passages which I would have to rewrite in an inferior manner, and again in the words of Montaigne I may say, 'I make others say for me what, either from want of language or want of sense, I cannot myself so well express.'





# C. JULIUS CAESAR

## I.—INTRODUCTORY

To write a full and exhaustive biography of Caius Julius Caesar, the man who, perhaps above all other men, impressed an indelible stamp on the history, not of Rome only, but of all Western Europe—a man whose life has engaged the pens of the ablest writers and the most profound scholars,—would be an impertinence for me to attempt. My design is to bring together before the reader sufficient details of the history of this great man to enable him to understand him as a man, and to appreciate the significance of his life.

But in order to understand him as a man, and to appreciate the significance of his life, it is not possible to dissociate him from the social and political history, not of his own epoch only, but of Rome from its cradle. He stood at a turning-point in the history of Rome, at a moment when it was quite uncertain whether Rome would maintain or lose her supremacy,—at a moment when it seemed as though, in a welter of antagonistic factions, the central authority must disappear, and the nations controlled and tortured by her would reassert their independence, and break for ever her yoke from off their necks, at a critical moment when, if Rome was to maintain her supremacy, her constitution must undergo consolidation and concentration.

To put all this before the reader requires a summary of the constitutional history of Rome, and a picture of the factions in Rome itself in the time of Caesar. To do this thoroughly is unnecessary, as it has been done exhaustively by others. Without some notion of the incompatibility of the constitution for what was required of it, of the deadlock at which affairs had arrived, of the futile struggles made first in one direction and then in the opposite, to solve the ever recurring problems, the story of Caesar's life would be unintelligible. Such a sketch is therefore a necessity. But a sketch alone must suffice.

The people of ancient Rome were the legislative power. The king was the ruler (*rex*), but law (*lex*) was the compact voluntarily entered into by the community.<sup>1</sup> The king could not make a law, nor ratify a law proposed to him. He proposed a law to the assembled

<sup>1</sup> Not from *ligare*, and so not a bond, but from the same root as *licet*, *ἔλκεν*.

people, that had been debated on by the senate, and put it to their vote; and only when they had thus sanctioned a law did it pass into a statute. This was the reverse of the principle of modern constitutional monarchy. The same theory manifested itself in another particular. The Court of Justice, acting under the king, might sentence a culprit to exile or to death. But there was always open to him an appeal to the ultimate authority—the people. Such an appeal was termed a ‘provocation.’ The people did not debate; they voted. The king did not rule by any divine sanction. He was elected from among the heads of the houses, *Patres*, to act as administrator of the law, and he ruled by virtue of a compact with the people. Till he had been presented to the people, and they had accepted him, he had no authority. After that, the plenitude of the imperium was lodged in him.

The Roman commonwealth was on a large scale the reproduction of the Roman household. That household consisted of father, children, guests, and servants. So, in the State the king represented the father, and the quirites the members of the family. And these alone were the citizens, patricians, descended from the heads of the families which had founded primitive Rome. But in addition to the citizens, the patricians, there was in Rome a large number of guests, members of other nations, perhaps alien, perhaps Latin, suffered to dwell on the banks of the Tiber, and exercise there their professions of mercantile enterprise or trade. These men had no civic rights. They sought the patronage of the patricians, and in reference to them were called clients. In the eye of the State they were the plebs, *i.e.* those void of rights. They existed on sufferance, but, in exchange for services rendered, were given a measure of protection.

The citizens alone were qualified to serve in war. They were called out on occasion, but the campaign was closed, and the citizens disbanded, as soon as the work of agriculture demanded their presence on their farms. The proud name that the citizens assumed was Quirites, that had originally precisely the same signification as Germans, *i.e.* spear-men—the free citizens, alone qualified to bear arms.<sup>1</sup>

As Rome subdued cities and peoples round about, many of the inhabitants of these cities, and masses of the people, were transferred to Rome, there to swell the population of the unfree. But these wars, carried on solely by the pure-blooded Roman citizens, thinned their ranks rapidly, and the plebs profited by the victories won without contributing anything towards gaining them. This plebeian population devoted itself to commerce, whereas the patrician held to agriculture. It became obvious that such a condition of affairs could not last. King Servius Tullius introduced a reform. Such plebeians as had acquired wealth and estates, were granted the citizenship, and were called upon to assist in the defence of their adopted country, and to share the

<sup>1</sup> Mommsen, i. 69, *note*.

economic burdens. Only the empty pockets and lacklands were excluded.

But although the plebs were thus accorded the rights of citizenship, there was no attempt made to fuse the classes. On the contrary, the pure-blooded patrician, the representative of the original founders of Rome, could not contract marriage with a plebeian, until the Canuleian law was passed (A.U.C. 310). Nor was the plebeian allowed any voice in the debates. He could neither hold an office in the State nor enter the senate. Before the citizenship was accorded him, he had no legal right to possess land, and his patron exercised authority over him and dealt with his property at his discretion.

The plebeian had gained a legal footing in the State, but not a legislative voice.

With the banishment of Tarquinius Superbus the royalty was not abolished; to the Roman mind the *imperium*, the administrative power and authority, must remain intact. But as a precaution against its misuse, curious and unique measures were adopted to limit it, or rather to provide checks against its being used for the purpose of the furtherance of personal ambition.

In the first place, in lieu of one king, two co-equal chief magistrates were elected, and called Consuls, *i.e.* those who sat together,—not one superior to the other, and possessed of a little more authority than the other.<sup>1</sup> Both received a co-ordinate authority; each received the *imperium* in its plenitude whole and undivided, and each in public solemnities wore the royal purple. Thus one consul acted as a check on the other.

In the second place, the term of office was limited to one year. As long as the consul was chief magistrate, he, like the king, could not be taken to task for what he did. But no sooner had he laid down his office than he could be impeached for any action he had taken during his consulate that was in excess of the powers committed to him.

In the third place, certain privileges that the king had possessed, chief among which was the appointment to the priesthood, were withdrawn from the consul, and the sacerdotal colleges were empowered to fill their vacancies by election.

Such an arrangement of co-ordinate sovereigns had its practical disadvantages, that were not slow to manifest themselves. If the two consuls did not agree on a measure, one could completely paralyse the action of the other. In time of war the arrangement was fatal. To obviate this difficulty, a provision was made that in cases of emergency a dictator could be appointed, supreme whilst he held his office, but the tenure of the dictatorship was limited to six months. No danger to the constitution was anticipated from such an arrangement, for not only was

<sup>1</sup> Consul, or consol, from the root *sol*, which appears in *solium*, *sella*, etc., and which is the same as *sed* in *sedeo*, *sedes*, *sodalis*, etc. *Consules* are therefore those who sat together, and hence deliberated together; cf. *ex-sul*, *prae-sul*, and *consilium*.

the time during which the dictator exercised absolute power very short, but those over whom he exercised it were levied from among the citizens themselves, all watchful and jealous of his power.

With the single exception of the appointment annually of the consuls, the constitution remained intact. It was an arch with the keystone knocked out, and its place supplied by two wooden wedges annually replaced.

The wealth of the plebeians was on the increase, and the number of the hereditary legislators was on the decline. It was no longer possible wholly to exclude the richest plebeians from the senate. Those esteemed most deserving of the honour were accordingly enrolled (*conscripti*), and admitted to the senate—not to speak, but to listen to the debates, and debarred other means of expressing their opinions than by stamping with their feet. Nor were any of the offices in the State thrown open to them. Nor were they regarded as having any claim on the common land or domain belonging to the State that had been confiscated from the cities and peoples who had taken up arms against Roman pretensions.

Presently, by means of conquest, the power of Rome extended beyond the confines of Italy, and it was no longer possible to limit military service to the winter months. Moreover the number of men raised from among the citizens did not suffice for the long and bloody wars entered upon. Accordingly the population of subjugated Italy was called on to furnish recruits, and to shed their blood in foreign lands for Rome, without being given any compensating advantage in return.

The expedient of constituting two co-equal holders of the imperium was advantageous only for checking personal ambition. It stereotyped the constitution as it was; for one consul could nullify the acts of the other. One might see that great abuses were growing, see that arrangements suitable for a small State bounded by the Alban and Sabine mountains were utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of one that extended across the seas; one consul could propose a law, but could not carry it without the sanction of his colleague.

Moreover, the briefness of the tenure of office made the holder incapable of obtaining a proper grasp of it. And the necessary consequence was that the executive fell into the hands of the one permanent body, the senate, and that the consul was converted into its chief functionary. The expulsion of the kings led accordingly to the enthronement in their place of an oligarchy, arrogating to themselves all offices in the State, appropriating to themselves all the State domains, holding the keys of the treasury and occupying the courts of justice, therefore ruling the decisions of the judges to the profit of the order.

The patrician landowners not only appropriated the common lands, but, by the employment of slave-labour, were able to undersell the free peasant in market produce. The peasant, moreover, drawn off for



military service, could not cultivate his land properly, and became involved in debt. The large owners lent him money, and if he could not pay they seized on his farm, and he returned to Italy from foreign conquest to find his wife and children homeless.

The condition of affairs became desperate, and a revolt of the plebs ensued, which led to the appointment of tribunes out of their class, for the protection of their interests.

The tribunes were empowered to exercise a *veto* on any bill proposed by the consuls, and to use the *intercessio* to stop any legal action taken against one of the class to which they belonged. Their office was purely negative and obstructive, and it introduced another element of arbitrariness into the conduct of affairs. It conduced in no way to rectify what was faulty in the constitution; it served only to prevent legislation against their class, and to protect individuals against judicial injustice. As one consul could obstruct reformatory proposals made by his colleague, so now could one tribune prevent the united action of both consuls and his own colleague, without giving a reason for so doing. The measure taken served to block the wheels of government, in no way to ease them.

Fresh difficulties were breeding.

The brief tenure of office, not extending beyond one or two years, whether at home or abroad, incapacitated the functionaries from organising and managing the finances in their detail. This called into existence a body of men who farmed the revenue, and paid lump sums into the treasury, extorting tolls and taxes from the people by their own agents. Moreover, the provisioning of the armies of Rome was intrusted to these speculators, as it was not possible for the ever-shifting officials to understand and manage all the particulars necessary. As private individuals had not the means, companies were formed, and thus the populations which were not citizens of Rome were subjected to the rapacity of these irresponsible capitalists and their agents, from whom they had no effective appeal.

These farmers, usurers, and managers of the commissariat, amassed vast fortunes, and were no longer content to sit speechless in the forum, and to be excluded from office. They succeeded in the first place in breaking down the wall of demarcation that prevented marriage between the classes, and then carried point after point till they had invaded every privilege and captured every office, even the consular. In process of time, therefore, every practical distinction between plebeian and patrician disappeared, and in the senate the *patres et conscripti* were resolved into the *patres conscripti*.

Nevertheless, no real improvement in the constitution had been made. Now, indeed, the rich plebeian ranked with the patrician, but class distinction was not abolished. From the fusion grew the body of optimates, the nobility holding all power, and the great mass of the people were left unable to exercise any.



The senate, having made itself master of the executive, proceeded to still further despoil the consuls of their power. Formerly, like the king, the consul had nominated all under-officials for the term of his tenure of the consulship, but now all the important branches of administration—the control over the exchequer, the appointment to vacancies in the senate, the supervision over the courts of law, the maintenance of order in the city,—were withdrawn from the consulate and given by the senate to functionaries who were nominated by the community, so that in place of being under the consul they were independent of him. But if the consular office had lost much of its ancient significance, it had acquired in process of time a new value as a stepping-stone to the government of a province; and the government of a province, though held for one or, at the outside, two years, meant the enrichment of the governor at the expense of the provincials. Rome had extended her conquests over three-quarters of the world, and the conquered countries and peoples lay at her feet to be sucked to exhaustion. The candidate for office had to obtain his election from the people, and the people were not blind to the value of what they gave. They asked for, they insisted on, repayment for their service in helping a candidate into the saddle. The candidate was constrained to stoop to the most degrading canvass for votes, and to pay for them with hard cash. And as the canvassing for all offices was in progress throughout the year for the officers for the ensuing year, Rome was kept in perpetual electioneering excitement, with all its concomitant demoralisation.

But this was not all. It was customary for every beardless aspirant after office to advertise himself by impeaching a returned provincial governor for malversation or oppression. The accused had not much cause to be afraid. His judges belonged to the same class, and aspired to the same office. Moreover, they had itching palms, and were ready to acquit for a fee. Thus a governor sent to rule for a twelvemonth in a province had to extort money from the ruled to indemnify himself for what he had expended in purchasing his election to the consulship or praetorship, and in providing for the expenses of an impeachment when he resigned his governorship, as well as amassing a fortune for himself.

In the meantime the condition of the peasant proprietor in Italy was becoming desperate. Every Roman general when he went to war was followed by speculators who bought those taken in battle, in an auction held on the field, or in a city after it had been stormed, and shipped them to Italy. In one day, in the market-place of Delos, 10,000 were produced and sold. Sicily was entirely cultivated by slave-labour. Corn poured in by sea from Egypt. Its price sank below the cost of production by the free peasant. The owners of small parcels of land struggled ineffectually against the competition, and sank in the struggle. They threw up their farms, sold them to the nearest noble owner, and came

to Rome to live there in idleness on what their votes would bring to them. In Etruria, the example of the Roman nobility was so closely followed that a century and a quarter before the Christian era there was not a free peasant remaining in the land. It was stated as an incontrovertible fact in the Roman forum, that the citizen who claimed to be Lord of the World was not so well off as the beast of the field. *That* had its lair, whereas *he* had not a clod to call his own, and naught was his, save the air of heaven and the sunlight.

But the Italian farmer was worse off than the Roman citizen. He had not even his vote to sell. In the army he was not treated on an equality with the Roman. A general might decapitate a Latin officer under him, but a private who was a Roman could appeal against his sentence.

Cato asked what would happen to Rome when the wars came to an end, and this was precisely the problem that had to be solved when the city entered on its seventh century. Opposition from without had ceased, but the internal cleavage now revealed itself. The question that excited greatest interest was however not political but social. Tiberius Gracchus demanded the restoration of the domains to the people. Properly, it might be argued there could be no talk of restoration, as the common land had belonged to the original citizens of Rome, but, on the other hand, much had been added thereto since the fusion, and the plebeians had been admitted to the rights of citizenship. It was a crying necessity that the free peasant should be encouraged, and how could that be better done than by distributing the State lands among the poor city populace? Gracchus was tribune of the people for one year. His proposal touched so many interests that it was vetoed, and he appealed away from the senate to the rabble. At the prospect of revolution all sympathy with him in the hearts of the capitalists dried up, and they threw in their lot with the nobles against him. His tribuneship at an end, Tiberius Gracchus was unprotected, and was fallen upon and murdered, along with three hundred of his adherents, by a party of fanatical nobles.

The moderate among the optimates fully admitted the necessity for measures to be taken to restore the peasant proprietor in Italy, though to a man they disapproved of the methods adopted by Gracchus, and when he had perished, they did not cancel his measure, but filled up the commission for carrying it into effect, as far as was feasible without violating vested interests.

Caius Gracchus, the younger brother of Tiberius, followed in his steps. The commission was acting too slowly, was too cautious to please him, and he resolved to obtain the parcelling out of the domains in a more thorough and less conciliatory manner. Conscious of the mistake in policy made by his brother in alienating the capitalists, Caius, on his election to the tribuneship, proceeded to gain them. This

he effected by proposing to transfer the courts of law from the senatorial order to that of the knights, or moneyed men of the people. Also, he offered to throw open to their rapacity the provinces of Asia that had hitherto not been submitted to them.

Then, knowing his danger after his term of office expired, he sought to secure the rabble, so as to effect his continuous re-election. This he did by proposing one of the most mischievous measures ever conceived by a popularity-hunter, and it was one which, when carried, Rome was never to shake itself free from. He proposed that a distribution of corn should be made to the citizens at the cost of the State, at less than half the average market price—thus at a stroke destroying the chief incentive to industry among the lower classes, and discouraging the citizen proprietor from the attempt to grow corn.

Having bribed two classes to support him, Caius Gracchus proceeded to despoil the senate of nearly all its power, and to place it in the hands of the mob—that is to say, to exercise it himself. All his measures were carried in an unconstitutional manner, and in defiance of the opposition of the senate. He succeeded in acquiring the tribuneship for a second year, and aimed at re-election for the third, when he would be able to consolidate his position. But now he proposed to extend the rights of citizenship to the cities of Italy. If he were to carry this he could calculate on the support of the large populations outside of Rome, and by the aid of their votes could overwhelm the party of the optimates. But he had miscalculated the sense of justice and liberality of feeling in a Roman rabble. The people were alarmed at the suggestion; such an influx of votes as was contemplated by C. Gracchus would lower the market value of their votes. They forsook him. He fell through at the next election, and, attacked by a body of nobles, he was driven to kill himself, and with him fell three thousand of his sympathisers. Then the senate proceeded to repeal every one of his reforms except only that of the transfer of the courts to the equites, which they left as a sop to the knights, and that of the dole of bread to the populace, which they did not venture to withdraw, at the risk of provoking a riot.

Thirty years passed after the bloody corpse of Caius Gracchus had been flung into the Tiber, and the oligarchy had maintained all its recovered powers. In these thirty years, the misrule in the provinces, the depopulation of Italy, and the oppression of the inhabitants of the peninsula, had not been mitigated one jot. The transfer of the courts to the equestrian order had intensified the evil. The governor of a province was now no longer responsible to the senate, but to the body of the capitalists. He was at their mercy. If he checked their proceedings in the provinces, if he did not allow them free rein to torture and despoil the people, he was haled on his return before their court and punished.

A flagrant instance was that of Q. Mucius Scaevola. He had been

praetorian governor of Asia, and, roused by the sufferings of the unhappy people under him, he had arrested and punished the worst of their tormentors. On his return to Rome the knights did not indeed venture to attack a noble with powerful friends, but they dragged his lieutenant or legate, Publius Rufus, before the judges, confiscated his goods, and banished him from Italy. The worst, the most unprincipled governor escaped scot-free, and every attempt to mitigate the distress of the people was resented, and the proconsul or proprætor who had showed this dangerous humanity on his return paid for it before a prejudiced court. The scandal was so flagrant that an attempt to redress it was made by M. Livius Drusus, a member of the aristocracy. He sought to withdraw the administration of justice from the knights, and to restore it to the senate. But this could not be done without enlisting the populace on his side against the financiers. Accordingly, as a bribe to the people, the agrarian proposals of the Gracchi were revived, and the mischievous precedent of feeding the people free of cost was followed in an extended fashion. The people thus won, Drusus, invested with the tribuneship, carried his bill. But when, like the younger Gracchus, he also advocated the extension of the rights of citizenship to the Italians, he was deserted by the fickle mob; he met with a fate similar to that of the Gracchi, and immediately on his death his measures were repealed.

The Italians had hoped in vain that the righteousness of their cause would have received recognition, but when Drusus fell, they despaired of getting a hearing save at the point of the sword, and throughout Italy the fires of revolt blazed. Immediately, the ultras in Rome carried the appointment of a Commission of High Treason to investigate into the conduct of all such as had taken an active part in favour of the Italians, and to punish them with banishment and confiscation of goods. They thus cleared the ground of all the moderate and upright men.

The insurrection gained ground, and Rome finally, in alarm, was constrained to grant the citizenship to those cities which had not as yet taken up arms, or would lay them down within a given time. This prevented the further spread of the conflagration, nevertheless the contest was maintained with great stubbornness for three years.

When the Social War was ended, and the mode in which the franchise was to be accorded came to be considered, difficulties presented themselves. If the new citizens were admitted on the same terms as the rest they would carry all before them by force of numbers. It was therefore resolved that they were to be qualified to vote, but were not to be suffered to vote unless the parties in Rome were so nicely balanced that they had to be called in to turn the scale one way or the other. It was, in fact, impossible to adapt to a great country a constitution originally fitted for a small civic community. And it was also evident that the new citizens would not rest long content with the scanty share of direct power



now accorded them. In fact, the discontent caused by disappointment was rife. It needed but an occasion for manifesting itself. The Social War had led to the concession of the principle, though not of the reality, of the great question of Italian enfranchisement.

The business of farming the revenue, protected in all its abuses by the equestrian law courts, had vastly enriched the publicans, the knights.<sup>1</sup> The Social War had impoverished temporarily many of the nobility whose estates throughout Italy had been trampled under foot and left untilled during the war. In their need for ready money they had gone to the capitalists, and they were relieved at a high rate of interest. Moreover the cost of election had become great, and a candidate for office had usually to borrow money to enable him to secure his election. Consequently the greater part of the ambitious nobles were indebted to the knights. Unable to recover themselves, they raked up an old law against usury, and refused to pay more than was by this law allowed. A case was brought before the praetor, Asellio; and he admitted that the money-lenders had made themselves liable to prosecution. The fury of the knights knew no bounds. They fell on the praetor, pelted him with stones, and butchered him.

Among the tribunes for this year was P. Sulpicius, who had been a friend of the unfortunate Drusus. He boldly gave notice of two measures—one admitting the Italians to the full franchise, placing them on a level with the old citizens; and a second, by which all freedmen who had served in the Italian wars should be rewarded for their fidelity by the gift of the full franchise. In vain did the consuls exercise their legitimate rights to interfere with this measure being carried. Sulpicius surrounded himself with a body-guard of three thousand young men armed with daggers, and carried his laws by overawing his opponents. Then he introduced a third bill, and carried it as a matter of course, by which the command in a war just engaged in against Mithridates, king of Pontus, should be transferred from Sulla, the representative of the conservative party, to Marius, the favourite of the mob.

A new element to complicate the strife of parties had grown up. This was the army, that was paid and retained under the standards for a term of years. The army had become a profession. It looked to its leaders to reward it for the services it rendered him in reaping laurels. There were at this epoch two rival commanders, C. Marius, a native of Arpinum, son of a small peasant, and Cornelius Sulla, member of an ancient but impoverished family. Each was ambitious to have the conduct of the war in Asia Minor, which was likely not only to cover the Roman general with renown, but also to give him, at the head of his troops, absolute control over affairs at home.

The command had been given to Sulla, but Sulpicius, by a law carried in defiance of the consuls and the senate, had transferred it to the

<sup>1</sup> Cicero frequently speaks of the *publicani* as identical with the *equites*.



rival Marius. Sulla was at the time in Southern Italy. He at once marched at the head of his troops to Rome; Marius fled, the head of Sulpicius was struck off, and all his measures were repealed. Sulla, having re-established order, and replaced the government on its ancient footing, departed to the East to conduct the Mithridatic war. No sooner was Sulla with the army in Asia than Marius returned, collected a body of Italian soldiers, and executed bloody reprisals on the aristocratic party. Violence had become familiar in Rome from the time of the murder of Tiberius Gracchus; each party as it attained the upper hand for a brief period, caused blood to flow in streams.

Marius himself was no politician, but behind him stood a man who understood how to manage the people. This was Cornelius Cinna. He had no brilliant abilities, but he was ambitious, and he knew exactly what he wanted, and what he could get. He made use of Marius, threw on him the blame of all the murders, and when the old general died, ruled supreme in Rome without him for the space of three years.

The war in the East concluded, Sulla returned at the head of his soldiers and reversed all that had been done by Cinna and Marius. He was appointed dictator, and as dictator he undertook the revision of the constitution. As dictator for life he acted with very little regard for republican precedent. The dictatorship had been in abeyance for a period of one hundred and twenty years; and whoever was named ought to be named, according to the old constitutional rule, for six months only. But Sulla demanded it for himself without limitation of time, and to a man at the head of a victorious army it could not be refused. He indeed summoned the people to elect the consuls, but at the same time intimated that no one was to venture to appear as candidate without his permission.

He cleared the stage of all antagonists by a remorseless proscription, and then endeavoured to prevent the families of the proscribed from ever again recovering influence or power. To this end he ordained that all their property should be sold, and the proceeds poured into the public treasury. Sulla next struck a blow at the power of the democracy. Since the time of the Gracchi the tribunes had exercised great and growing powers, which they had usurped, absorbing more and more not only of the legislative but also of the executive power. To counteract this he ordered that the candidates for the tribunate should henceforth necessarily be members of the senate, and that no tribune should have the power to propose a law to the people. The tribunes had thus their teeth drawn, and were no longer, as he anticipated, to be feared as the representatives of the opposition. The old rule had been that no measure could be presented to the assembly of the people to be voted on till it had been ratified by the senate, but this had been dispensed with for the *Comitia Tributa*, B.C. 287. Sulla required that the old rule should be strictly enforced. He then proceeded to reconstruct

the senate, greatly reduced in numbers by wars, massacres, and proscriptions. He filled it up to the old complement of three hundred from the wealthiest of his own adherents, and from the knights. Finally, he took away the judicial power from the equestrian order, and restored it absolutely to the senate.

Such were the chief measures of Sulla. The general purpose and effect of the whole was to restore the constitution in all points as nearly as possible to the condition which it had assumed before the time of the Gracchi. This he had effected because he had the military power behind him, and he taught the Romans the truth that no change was possible that would be enduring, unless it were effected by a man with material strength at his back to enable him to crush all opposition; and moreover, that his work might endure, he must hold his office not for one or two years, but for a term during which he could secure the institutions he had called into being, and protect his measures of reform from being overthrown by the recoil wave of party feeling. Able and thorough as had been the remodelling of the constitution of Sulla, it was not destined to last above eight years; then, under Pompeius, the tribunes were restored, and the independence of the assembly of the people was restored with it.

Such, very briefly put, was the constitutional history of Rome, and such the position of parties when Caius Julius Caesar was required to decide the fate of the commonwealth.

The authorities for a Life of Caesar are not many, nor are they of equal value. We have, apart from certain military records, his own Commentaries, and a man who takes the pen in hand can hardly fail to paint himself. We have the letters and speeches of Cicero, his friend in youth, his foe, though not openly, in manhood. Velleius Paterculus comes next; he wrote just seventy-three years after the assassination of Caesar. Unfortunately his history is a dry compendium.

Next we have the compilers separated from the age of Caesar by a century and a half, or two centuries, but who are valuable in that they have preserved notices from contemporary records now lost to us. These latter were naturally coloured by the passions called into life by the actions of Caesar. Moreover, the writers of a later age, looking back longingly to the golden epoch—golden to a single class, but of inexpressible misery to all beside, when Rome was in name a republic, in reality a close oligarchy,—took their view of the early Caesars from the opinion entertained of them by that noble class they depressed.

Suetonius, the best of these later authorities, perhaps strives to be fair, but he was a writer who sought above all to make his book amusing, and for this purpose stuffed his pages with the most *piquant* stories—their piquancy, not their truth, constituting their claim to insertion.

Plutarch, who comes next, used the writings of two of Caesar's friends and fellow-soldiers, Asinius Pollio and Caius Oppius, but though he derived from them certain personal incidents in the history of the great dictator, he went to his enemies for the interpretation of his motives. He was a Greek, and only visited Italy passing. Consequently he had not the knowledge of the condition of the commonwealth in the age of Caesar to enable him rightly to judge of his conduct towards that commonwealth.

As for Dio Cassius, our next authority, a native of Bithynia who wrote at Rome in the first years of the third century, 'It would be difficult,' says Mr. George Long, 'to find an instance in which this malignant writer ever speaks of any man as acting from a good motive.' Unhappily, for many of the facts relative to the life of Julius Caesar we are obliged, through default of earlier writers, to trust to Dio. For the Civil Wars we have also Appian, a compiler of the middle of the second century.

## II.—THE EARLY YEARS OF CAESAR.

CAIUS JULIUS CAESAR was the son of a father of the same name, and of Aurelia, probably the daughter of M. Aurelius Cotta. His paternal grandfather and great-grandfather also bore the name of Caius. His grandmother was a Marcia, and belonged to a family that assumed the cognomen of Rex, and traced their pedigree to Ancus Marcius, the fourth king of Rome, of Sabine race, who had extended the Roman citizenship to the heads of the Latin cities that had fallen under his sway. He it was who had given up the Aventine to Latin settlers. Ancus had pursued a liberal policy towards the surrounding peoples. It is possible that the recollection of the acts of his ancestor Ancus Marcius may have been one of the elements that combined to give direction to the policy of Julius Caesar—one of generosity towards provincials.

He had an uncle, Sextus, and an aunt, Julia. The name of Sextus was a favourite in the family only second to Lucius. The Julian house was rich, though not one of the richest of the patrician houses. It pretended to be derived from an alliance between Anchises and Venus. Now the cult of the Greek goddess Aphrodite did not find entrance into Rome before B.C. 295, when, strangely enough, she was identified with Venus, the old Roman goddess of gardens. The Latin deities were abstractions, without personality, and with no myths surrounding them. Consequently the fable of descent from Aphrodite must have originated some time after the fusion had been effected, and is of value only so far as to show us that the garden patroness was the special divinity to whom the cult of the Julian gens was given. The cognomen of Caesar is variously deduced. It was popularly deduced from a Mauritanian word for an elephant, and a legend was told to account for its adoption.

The elephant was the totem or heraldic badge of the Caesars, and as such appears on some of the medals. It ornaments the breastplate of Caligula in one of his busts.<sup>1</sup>

When on the death of his aunt Julia, Caesar pronounced her panegyric, he said, 'She, on her maternal side, is the issue of kings; on her paternal she descends from the immortal gods; for her mother was a Marcia, and the family of Marcus Rex are the descendants of Ancus Marcius. The Julian family, to which I belong, traces its pedigree from Venus herself. Thus our house unites to the sacred character of kings, the most powerful among men, the venerated holiness of the gods who hold the very kings under their sway.'

The marriage of this aunt Julia to Caius Marius was, in a fashion, a *mésalliance*. The Aurelian gens from which issued Caesar's mother was plebeian, but Caius Marius was not the son of a wealthy plebeian or of an equestrian house. He was the son of a small peasant of Cereate, a village near Arpinum, in the hill-country near the banks 'which Liris eats with gentle wave.' It was an old Volscian town that had passed under the sway of the Samnites, from whom it had been wrested by the Romans and then given the franchise.

Cicero, who was a native of Arpinum, but of equestrian rank, describes its inhabitants as rustic and simple, like the rugged district they occupied, but with the virtues of mountaineers. The cyclopean walls and rude gate of the old city remain, constructed of vast blocks of untooled stones. Like one of these rude blocks was Caius Marius himself. Juvenal says that in youth he had served for hire as a common labourer, but this is a piece of late exaggeration. Plutarch simply says that he was the son of obscure parents who gained their living by the labour of their hands, and were very poor. In a word, he was the child of a boor. He entered the army at an early age, distinguished himself in Spain, and made his fame in the African war against Jugurtha, to which he put a climax by saving Italy from the Teutones and Cimbri, defeating the former near Aix and the latter at Vercellae.

Marius never shook off the boor. He was rough in appearance and uncouth in manner all his days. He inherited the virtues and the vices of his class. Blunt in speech, ungracious in manner, uncomfortable in the society of those who were his superiors, he was cunning, cautious, and ambitious. He lacked a high sense of honour; was remorseless in avenging personal slights; was temperate and chaste, despised luxury, and was of considerable though not consummate military genius.

Plutarch tells us a story of the man that may be quoted as characteristic.

A Roman, especially a Roman soldier, showed his legs a great deal, and those of Caius Marius were disfigured by moles or something of the

<sup>1</sup> Most probably Caesar meant 'with a full head of hair'; cf. Sanskrit *Kēśa* (hair).



sort. Probably at the representation of his wife, he submitted his legs to an operator to have the unsightly moles removed. He refused to be bound, but stretched out one leg, and bade the surgeon begin. It was a tedious business, and when one leg had been satisfactorily treated, Marius refused to stretch out the other to be dealt with in the same manner. 'The result,' said he, 'is not worth the pain.'

His voice was harsh, his temper hot, and his face wore a threatening expression. Before an enemy in the field he could be cool, but he lost his composure in the forum. His hair was ragged, and he paid no regard to his personal appearance. He was superstitious as a peasant. In the campaign against the Ambrons and Teutons, he took about with him a Syrian prophetess called Martha, and he strove to obtain the consulate, not because he believed in his own talents, but because an Etruscan augur had discovered in the liver and kidneys of a calf that he was destined for that office. He was void of social tact and political intelligence. He offended the senate by marching into it in his triumphal military costume, and when he invited the aristocracy to his table, served up before them a dinner that might satisfy hungry soldiers, but was not palatable to pampered aristocrats. He did not care for Greek plays, and had the frankness to admit it. In his political career he was an inveterate blunderer.

Such was Caesar's uncle by marriage. In spite of his defects, it is certain that his nephew entertained a lively admiration for the genius and virtues of the old general. But posterity cannot overlook his unworthy conduct in Africa towards his superior officer, Metellus, nor the butchery in Rome whereby he revenged the slights put upon him when his star was in the decline.

Caius Julius Caesar was born on July 12th, B.C. 102.<sup>1</sup> Of his father not much is known. He obtained the praetorship, and died at Pisa in B.C. 84, when his son was eighteen years old.

Aurelia, the mother of Caius Julius, was a matron of the old school, managing her house with simplicity and frugality; and holding tenaciously to the traditional customs and virtues of the ancient Romans, virtues that were becoming unhappily as unfashionable as the customs

<sup>1</sup> The date of Caesar's birth is usually put at 654, because Suetonius, Plutarch, and Appian say he was aged 56 when he died. But this is irreconcilable with the fact that he was aedile in 689, praetor in 692, and in 695 was consul. That is to say, he entered on all these offices two years before he legally could do so, and not a word about exception in his favour in this matter escapes any historian; nor did his deadly foes make use of this legitimate plea of opposing his candidature. It is most probable that Suetonius, Appian, and Plutarch are quoting from the same authority, who was mistaken by two years in the age of Caesar. This is Mommsen's view, and I have ventured to follow him.

The denarius struck at the outbreak of the Civil War bears on it the numerals LII., and if this does not mean his age, one does not know what it can mean. He was in fact at that time somewhat over 52. One does not see how he could have obtained the priesthood under Marius had he not assumed the toga virilis. See Mommsen, iii. p. 16, *note*.





Cornelia, the daughter of Cinna, lately deceased, and by so doing identified himself, or was thought to have identified himself, with the party of which Cinna had been the head. He had been engaged previously by his father to Cosueta, daughter of a moneyed knight, but this engagement had been distasteful to him, and on the death of his father, Caesar considered himself free to choose his own wife. By Cornelia he had a daughter, Julia, born within a year of his marriage.

A.U.C. 671.  
B.C. 83.  
Act. 19.

In October B.C. 82, Sulla entered Rome, and then ensued a massacre that threw into the shade the irregular slaughter that had followed the entry of Marius.

Sulla drew up proscription lists, and surrendered every one whose name was published on them to be put to death by whomsoever listed. Rewards were offered for the heads of the victims, and even to such as betrayed their places of concealment. Sulla not only desired to revenge himself on the friends of Marius and to break the power of the democracy, but also to obtain for his soldiery lands and treasure; consequently the proscription lists were swelled with the names of those whose wealth and estates were coveted, as well as with such as were politically obnoxious. Not Rome only but all Italy was thus treated: cities as well as individuals were despoiled on the most frivolous pretences. To secure the army to his interest, it must be richly rewarded for past services, and to have the veterans ready to rise at his call they must be planted near Rome and throughout the Peninsula.

A.U.C. 672.  
B.C. 82.  
Act. 20.

Sulla had blue eyes and red hair,—golden he was pleased to consider it; his face was burnt by exposure and blotched by intemperance. The name Sulla was thought to be descriptive of his complexion, for it signified a brick earth that burnt to a purple red. A Greek wag composed on him a line to the effect that his head was a mulberry besprinkled with meal.

He belonged to a patrician family, originally Rufinus, of the Cornelian gens, and the red hair or complexion may have been hereditary. Sulla inherited nothing from his father, and for some time had lived in lodgings. Many years later, when he was in power, he ordered the execution of a man who had sheltered one of the proscribed. 'What!' exclaimed the poor wretch, 'do you thus treat an old fellow-lodger? I lived in the attic over you, at a rent of two thousand sesterces, when you were in the story below at three thousand.'

Though his father left him nothing, yet he inherited an estate from his mother-in-law, and a woman who took a fancy to him constituted him her heir. In a desultory fashion he loved art and pursued literature. He collected statues and wrote verses; but he had low tastes also, and affected the society of buffoons and actresses. He was beloved and feared by his soldiery; he shared their labours and privations, and was not above cutting coarse jests with them around the camp-fires. But

he was a disciplinarian, and demanded exact obedience. A gentleman by birth, he had been thrown with the vulgar in his youth, and through life he remained a mixture of refinement and grossness. 'A fox is he and a lion in one,' said Carbo of him; 'but most dangerous as a fox.' His whole nature was double. He was reckless, and yet crafty; generous, but also mean; luxurious, but, when he chose, most abstemious. He was wholly indifferent to human suffering, and sacrificed lives without scruple, yet was not by nature cruel.

It is much to be regretted that we cannot say with any degree of certainty whether we have portraits of Marius and Sulla in any of the Galleries in Europe. Unfortunately there is no medal that bears the profile of Marius. That seal in glass, inscribed C. Marius VII. COS., formerly in the Casali collection, cannot now be traced; Visconti believed it to be genuine, though not contemporaneous. It represented a man far too young to be Marius in his seventh consulship.

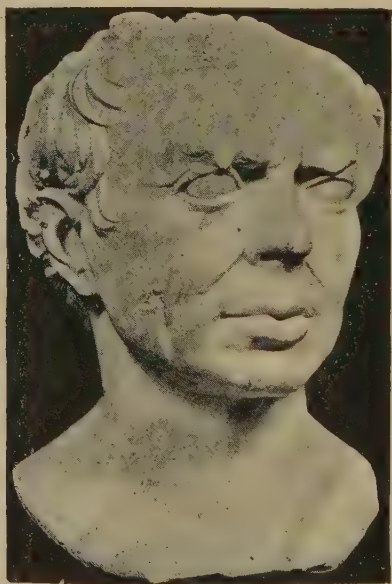


FIG. 2.—CAIUS MARIUS. Bust in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 512.

There are two admirable heads in the Chiaramonti Gallery in the Vatican (Nos. 512, 510A), the first thought to be C. Marius, and the latter representing the same man has been erroneously called in the Catalogue Munatius Plancus. They belong to the first century, and are unmistakably portraits of the same man at different periods of his life. Both are remarkably fine and characteristic heads, and were both originally placed on statues. The first represents the head turned to

the right, the other turned to the left. The hair is tossed wildly on the head; the skull broadens above the ears. The brows hang down, and in the older portrait form very peculiar droopings over the eyes, which latter are eager and fierce. The mouth is large, and the lower lip projects with a sharp sweep under it. The upper lip is long, and the chin square and small. The ears are large and ill-formed. These are indubitably the portraits of some man of conspicuous political importance, from the excellence of their execution; they agree with the description given us of C. Marius, and if they do not represent him we are moreover somewhat at a loss to know to whom else to apply them. There is another in the Wallraf Museum at Cologne whence obtained is not known, that agrees strikingly with the younger of these two portraits.<sup>1</sup>



FIG. 3.—L. CORNELIUS SULLA. Denarius, enlarged.

We are hardly better off with regard to portraits of Sulla. A silver medal struck by Q. Pompeius Rufus, his nephew, in B.C. 59, does indeed give us a clear and good profile; but when we come to busts we are in difficulties. A very fine bust in the Vatican (Nuovo Braccio, No. 60) has been thought to represent Sulla; the profile bears some likeness to that on the coin; but what caused its attribution was probably the mole represented on the side of the mouth. We have no reason to say that Sulla had a mole. The joke about the mulberry applied to his colour, and not to his having an excrescence like a mulberry on his face. In the Torlonia Gallery (No. 412) is a bust of the same man from the Albani villa; and a bust on a toga-statue in Lansdowne House represents the same man at a more advanced age. All that can be said for these is that they may *possibly* be portraits of Sulla.<sup>2</sup>

One is tempted to compare the Chiaramonti busts supposed to

<sup>1</sup> The statue at St. Petersburg has an inscription, but it is one of the Campana forgeries, with which the Hermitage is crowded. A bust in the Torlonia Gallery (No. 507) is somewhat like those in the Chiaramonti Gallery. The head is extremely flat at top.

<sup>2</sup> Bernoulli thinks No. 424B in the Chiaramonti Gallery may be Sulla. The shape of the head is not that of the Sulla on the medal, nor does the formation of the mouth agree. The chin on the coin inclines to the double. The nose is a conjectural restoration. But for the smallness of the mouth, the bust might be intended for Julius Caesar.



represent Marius with that in the *Nuovo Braccio*, thought to be the portrait of Sulla, and indeed they do admirably express the characters of the different men; but we have not sufficient certainty of the correctness of the attribution to warrant us in so dealing with them.

We must return to Caesar, and go back a little.

Probably in his uncle's house Caesar made the acquaintance of the two Ciceros, Marcus and Quintus, natives of Arpinum, whence also came Marius. They were remotely connected with him, just sufficiently connected for them to be able to use him and his house if convenient to themselves, and sufficiently remotely to be able to drop his acquaintance should it suit their purpose. Caesar and Marcus Cicero grew up together on terms of familiarity. They separated in policy later in life, for Cicero attached himself to the oligarchical party that employed and despised the clever new man from the country. Marcus Cicero never understood the character of his early friend. Great as were his abilities, sincere as was his love of his country, Cicero lacked breadth of mind. He contemplated everything from the standpoint of how it would affect himself first of all, and then how it would benefit his country. Politically he was one of the most short-sighted of men, and was incapable of sounding the depths of such a mind and soul as were those of Caesar. It has been the fortune of Cicero to paint himself, in his voluminous correspondence, with all his little meannesses, his insincerity, his inordinate self-conceit, his lack of generosity, and his veritable stupidity in all matters demanding statesmanship. He no more saw what remedies were necessary for the sick constitution than he did the futility of those at which he grasped. He had so little appreciation of character that he leaned his whole weight on Pompeius, the most untrustworthy of men, and followed him even when he was well aware that his success would lead to more frightful excesses than were committed by Sulla. When he looked on Caesar passing his finger through his hair, deep in thought—it was a trick he had—he supposed that he was meditating the destruction, not the salvation, of the tottering State.

Sulla had known his own mind; he had remodelled the constitution so as to place the power absolutely in the hands of the aristocracy. And to maintain it there all that was needed was a massacre of the liberals every twenty or thirty years. Pompeius had himself made a breach in Sulla's reformed constitution, and yet Cicero trusted him to patch up the hole he himself had made. The nobles following Pompeius saw that this could only be effected by Sulla's method, and put their swords and daggers to the grindstone to carry it out. Cicero groaned in spirit, regretted that it must be so, but rather than abandon the chance of the rehabilitation of oligarchical supremacy was prepared to endure such infamous methods. But was it possible that the Roman world could submit to such mismanagement? Was it the right way to secure stability to an incompetent government by periodically making a clean sweep of



political opponents? These were questions Cicero was incompetent to answer, though they were questions that started up in his confused mind.

We obtain a better opinion of Cicero from his portraits than we should form from his political conduct. Happily the identification of these portraits can be made with some certainty. The well-known Magnesian bronze medal has long been regarded as giving us the type of the head of M. Tullius Cicero, but erroneously. It is a medal struck in honour of his son. The type-giving busts are two, one at Madrid with the genuine inscription on it, M. Cicero An. LXIII., that is to say, the great

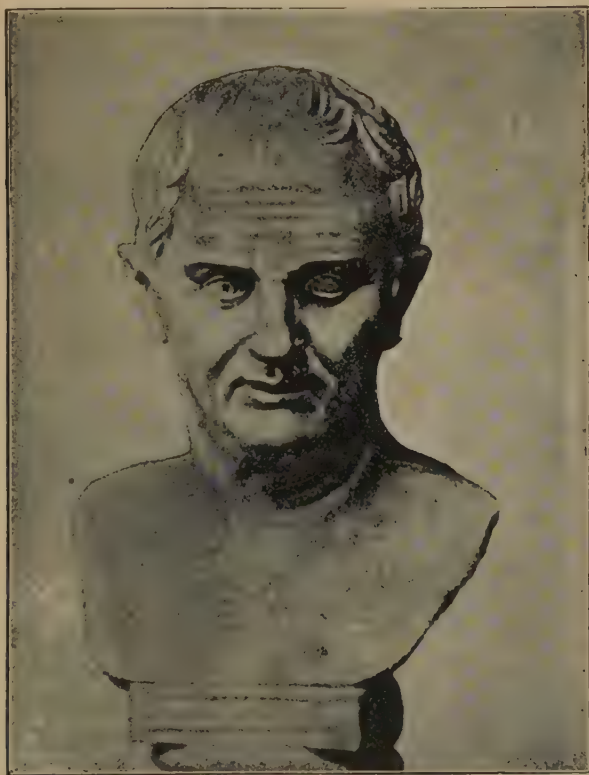


FIG. 4.—M. TULLIUS CICERO. Bust at Madrid  
(after Bernoulli).

orator in his sixty-fourth year; and another with his name on it in Apsley House, a rude replica of the Madrid bust, or, more probably, both are copies of a lost original. The Madrid bust, in Greek marble, certainly is a contemporary portrait, but a copy, for all that, from a better original. The upper lip is pointed, the nose sharp, the brow lofty, and the head high. There is a genial, amiable expression in the face, but at the same time a readiness in the sharp, nervous mouth to shoot forth

bitter words.<sup>1</sup> The cheeks are flat, the head lofty; there are in it both imagination and self-esteem if there be any truth in phrenology. The brow is deficient in breadth, and there is no massiveness over the

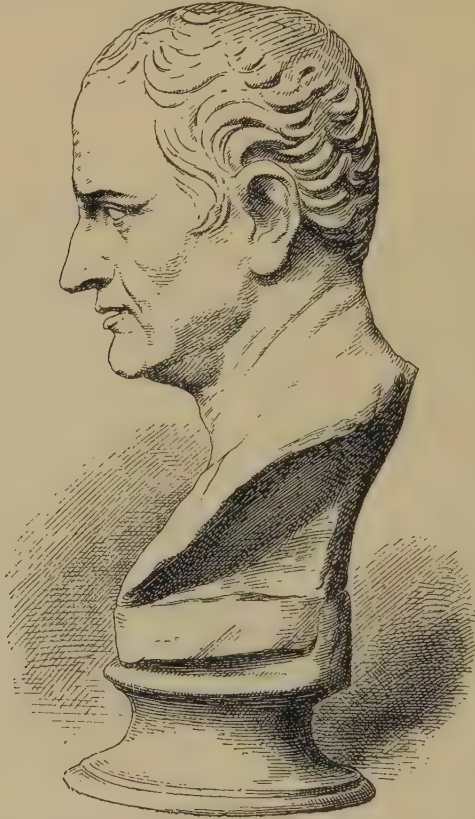


FIG. 5.—M. TULLIUS CICERO. Profile of the Bust at Madrid.

eyebrows. The head is much that of an English parson intellectually able, who is on the look-out for a deanery, and is careful to avoid pro-

<sup>1</sup> 1. Bust at Madrid, described above.

2. Bust at Apsley House. Much restored; nose, lips, chin, new.

3. Head at Woburn Abbey, resembling the above.

4. Head in the Charamonti Gallery (No. 698) found in Roma Vecchia. Half the nose, ears, and breast new. A portrait of the same man, but a different portrait. The expression much more dissatisfied than in the Madrid bust.

5. Similar head to 4, at Turin, with a more cheerful expression.

6. Bust at Florence, of again another type, but of the same man. A fine head; the upper lip not pointed; the brow contracted as though in thought; the nose sharp; head somewhat turned to the left.

7. Head at Mantua labelled Maecenas. Resembles 6. It is, however, much restored.

8. Head in the Capitoline Museum. The identification more than doubtful.

The portraits usually labelled Cicero in the Galleries belong, perhaps, to Corbulo.

nounced opinions,— can tell a good story, preach a good sermon, likes to associate with titled persons, loves his glass of port, but will preside at a temperance meeting.

In the proscription of Sulla Caesar escaped. The dictator spared the lad of twenty, but he was disposed to spare him on his own conditions. He must divorce his young wife, the mother of the little Julia, and ally himself to the daughter of a house engaged in the faction of the Optimates. Sulla had been strengthening his party by drawing into it promising young men from the other side by means of this sort. M. Pupius Piso, at the dictator's suggestion, had divorced his wife Annia, the widow of Cinna. Piso had belonged to the popular party whilst the sun shone on it, but changed sides as the shadows gathered over it, and in token of his conversion put away his wife, whom he had married barely a twelvemonth before, and placed his hand at the disposal of Sulla. Cnaeus Pompeius also, a handsome youth, with large melting eyes, so fresh-looking that one lady said she longed to eat him, was married to Antistia, daughter of P. Antistius and Calpurnia. She had been recently bereaved of both parents. Her father had been murdered by order of the younger Marius, and her mother, frantic with grief, had committed suicide. But Sulla's wife by her first husband had a daughter, Aemilia, married to M. Acilius Glabrio, the censor. Sulla advised Glabrio and Pompeius both to divorce their wives, and then ordered young Pompeius to take to him Aemilia. It was a heartless and ungenerous proceeding, as the father of Antistia had died for the cause of Sulla. But a woman's feelings weighed nothing with the dictator, nor were they considered by Pompeius when put in the scale against ambition. He submitted without a murmur.

But it was otherwise with Caesar. Sulla recognised his abilities, and as he belonged to a fine old patrician family, thought it would be easy to break the loose threads that attached him to the *populares*. To him he made a similar proposal, with confidence that he would meet with as ready compliance. He was mistaken. The answer of Caesar was a decisive refusal.

'The terrible Sylla,' says Mr. Froude, 'in the fulness of his strength, after desolating half the houses in Italy, after revolutionising all Roman society, from the peasant's cottage in the Apennines to the senate-house itself, was defied by a mere boy. Throughout his career Caesar displayed always a singular indifference to life. He had no sentimental passion about him, no Byronic mock heroics. . . . He intended, if he was to live at all, to live master of himself in matters which belonged to himself. Sylla might kill him if he so pleased. It was better to die than to put away a wife who was the mother of his child, and to marry some other woman at a dictator's bidding. Life on such terms was not worth keeping. So proud a bearing may have commanded Sylla's admiration, but it taught him, also, that a young man, capable of

assuming an attitude so bold, might be dangerous to the rickety institutions which he had constructed so carefully. He took his wife's dowry from him, and confiscated the estate which he had inherited from his father. When this produced no effect, the rebellious youth was made over to the assassins, and a price was set on his head.<sup>1</sup>

Caesar fled in time. He was ill with fever, and in this condition he wandered among those opalescent Sabine mountains that raise their broken heads against the sky to the east of Rome, and changed his hiding-place nearly every night. Once he fell in with the party sent to capture and murder him, under a certain Cornelius Phagita. With difficulty he succeeded in bribing the fellow with two talents, equal to £480, to spare him. Years after when he had the power to punish this man he would not do so. 'He never could bear the thought of injuring Cornelius Phagita,' says Suetonius, 'who had dogged him in the night, when sick and a fugitive.'

Presently the powerful friends of Caesar were able to interfere, chiefly Aurelius Cotta, his mother's brother, and Mamercus Lepidus, a connection. The Vestal Virgins moreover interceded in his favour. Sulla yielded at last, exclaiming, 'So be it then! yet believe me,—of Marii there be many in this loose-girt lad.'

'Sulla had judged truly,' says Napoleon. 'Many a Marius, in fact, was summed up in this one Caesar: Marius, the great captain, but with a larger military genius; Marius, the enemy of the oligarchy, but without hatred and without cruelty; Marius, in a word, no longer the man of a faction, but the man of his age.'

Although his life was spared, it was no longer prudent for Caesar to remain in Italy. He therefore crossed into Asia, and threw himself on the hospitality of Nicomedes, king of Bithynia. He never forgot the kindness of his reception, and in after years, when he had the opportunity, he became the advocate of the Bithynians, and pleaded their cause against Cicero before the senate.

Long afterwards scandalous stories circulated in Roman society relative to the moral conduct of Caius Julius during his residence at the Bithynian court. They were used against him by his political adversaries, who left no stone unturned beneath which some dirt might be found wherewith to bespatter his character. Whether true or false mattered little.

Cicero, we are informed, cast the charge in the face of Caesar when opposed to him in the trial above mentioned; but Cicero was perfectly unscrupulous in his efforts to blacken the character of those to whom he was opposed. Bibulus, his defeated, skulking fellow-consul, spat out the same foul slanders just forty-one years after the visit of Caesar to Nicomedes. As far as can be gathered, this story was built on the gossip of some merchants who had seen the young Caesar associated

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Caesar*, 2d ed. p. 95.



with persons of bad character, waiting at table on the king, and concluded that because he was in their company, *therefore* he was as bad as they. No better evidence than this to substantiate an infamous charge could be discovered by the ingenuity of Suetonius.

Whilst Caesar was in Asia, Sulla had quelled opposition. His opponents were dead, banished, or remained still through fear. Then he undertook and carried through the reforms already spoken of. That done, Sulla resigned his dictatorship, and weary of the strain on his mind and the occupation of his time retired to his amusements, and diverted himself with a young and beautiful wife. The engagement came about in an odd fashion. He was sitting one day in the amphitheatre, when he felt a light pluck at his garment behind. He turned, to see a young lady with saucy eyes, who excused herself on the plea that she sought to pluck, along with the nap off his toga, some of his good luck to herself. This led to an acquaintance, and to his marrying the girl Valeria. He died not long after, esteeming himself the favourite of fortune to the end.

No sooner was the redoubted dictator dead, than the democrats, who had retired into their holes, thrust forth their heads and looked about them, then stole forth and began to consult how to undo all that Sulla had done.

There was no continuity in government; it was a perpetual see-saw between rivals who regarded nothing save the interests of themselves and their party.

On the death of Sulla, Caesar returned to Rome, to find that there was already a movement begun to undo Sulla's reform. It was headed by M. Aemilius Lepidus, who was consul when Sulla died, and by D. Junius Brutus, who pretended to trace his  
A. U. C. 676.  
B. C. 78.  
Act. 24.
descent from the great Brutus, the king-expeller, and, failing to establish the claim, made up for deficiency of proof by blatant republican sentiment.

In B. C. 77 Lepidus was at the head of an army. He was then pro-consul, and he was joined by young Cinna, Caesar's brother-in-law. Lepidus demanded the restoration of all the lands confiscated by Sulla to the families and cities that had been despoiled. He further required the reinstatement of the tribunes in all their ancient privileges. Caesar either considered these demands too great, or he had no confidence in the leaders. He declined their overtures to join them, and the event justified his refusal. Cn. Pompeius and Catulus were invested by the senate with authority to raise an army against Lepidus and Brutus. The latter was slain. Lepidus fled to Sardinia, where he died. Thus ended this abortive attempt to undo the work of Sulla.

But although Caesar would not join in this rash venture, he appeared before the public in the same year in such a manner as to show to Rome and the provinces what was the direction of his mind, and where his sympathies lay. M. Cornelius Dolabella had been proconsul of

Macedonia at the time that Caesar had been in Bithynia, and the cries of distress and murmurs of resentment uttered by the oppressed had reached his ears. He seized the occasion of his return to impeach Dolabella for malversation in his government.

His object was twofold, and he attained it. In the first place, Dolabella being a prominent member of the oligarchy, by this impeachment Caesar showed that his party allegiance had not been shaken, and he let the provincials understand that he had their interests at heart.

That he failed to obtain the condemnation of Dolabella was a foregone conclusion. Dolabella had been a favourite of Sulla, he belonged to the governing faction, and the court in which he was tried consisted exclusively of senators.

Perhaps Caesar was dissatisfied with the effect of his oratory, for he immediately withdrew from Italy to place himself under instruction in elocution at Rhodes. On his way thither he was captured by pirates, who at this time infested the Mediterranean; he was conveyed to the isle of Pharmacusa, and there detained till a ransom equal to about ten thousand pounds sterling was forthcoming. Whilst in their hands Caesar joined in their sports, observed their habits, measured their powers of resistance to a serious attack, and frankly told them that as soon as ever he was free, he would not rest till he had hung them to the last man. The ransom arrived, and Caesar was released. He at once collected armed vessels, caught his late captors when off their guard dividing the plunder, and had them strangled and then crucified. It was noted at the time as an act of exceptional humanity that the youthful Caesar should put the wretches to death before stretching their bodies on the crosses. That was not how Pompeius and Crassus, a few years later, treated Spartacus and the revolted slaves. They impaled six thousand of them, and suffered them to languish on their crosses for many days in indescribable torture.

To this period of Caesar's life belongs the nude statue now in the Louvre. It is of admirable Greek art, perhaps the most beautiful portrait-statue we possess. It represents Caesar as Hermes; the head is slightly bent forward, and his eyes are fixed on some object at a distance below the level of his feet. The attitude may be said to be that of an orator addressing the people from the rostrum. His arched, lofty head is covered with short locks combed forwards. It is remarkable that the top of the head was at one time different, and was removed, and the present one put in its place. The fingers and thumb of the left hand, that in a Hermes would hold the caduceus, seem also to have been altered. They were wanting in the statue when found. Whether a cap of Hermes covered the head, and it shocked Roman feeling to have a young man thus likened to a god, and consequently was altered, we cannot say. On the base below

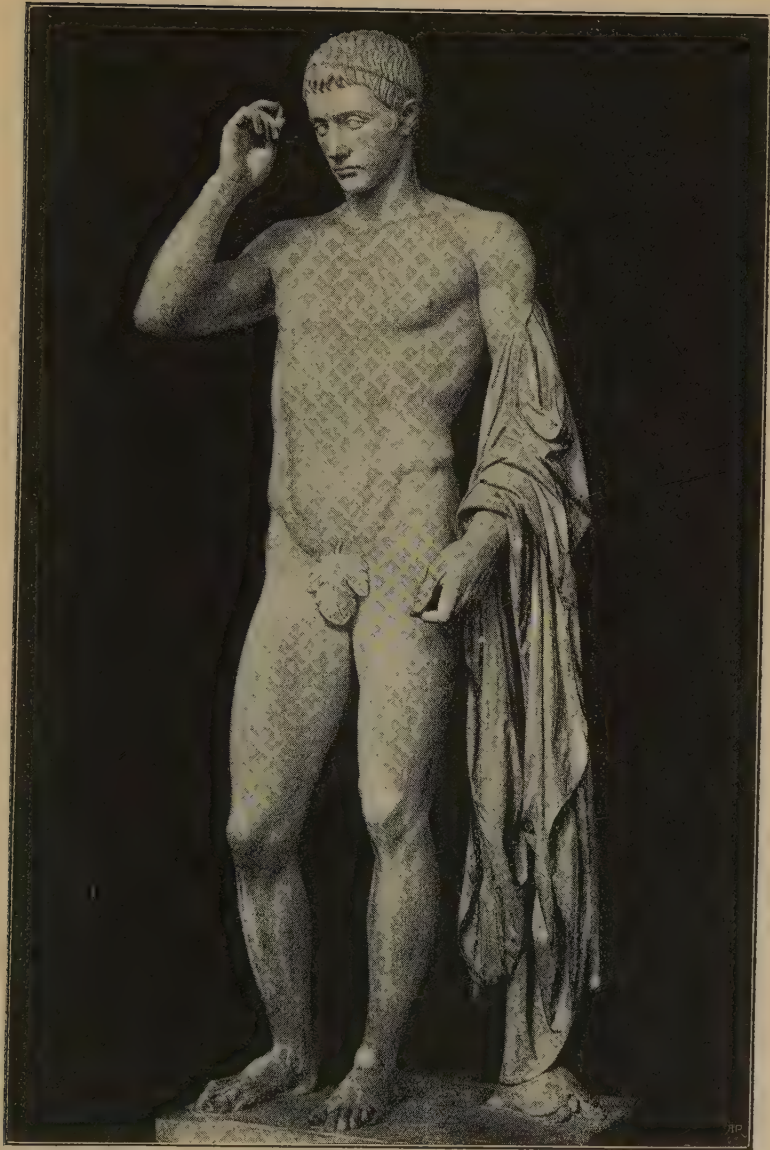


FIG. 6.—C. JULIUS CAESAR, as Hermes, in the Louvre.

the falling chlamys is the tortoise, symbol of the god. One hand is raised.<sup>1</sup>

It was a happy thought of Cleomenes the Athenian, who was the artist, to catch a trick of Caesar, in raising his finger to his hair, and give thus to his portrait a character of its own. The left hand is lowered, with the mantle cast gracefully over it. The statue was found in Rome. There has been much hesitation over the identification. To my eye the profile and full face alike are those of a youthful Caesar. I sub-



FIG. 7.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Profile of youthful Statue in the Louvre.

mitted them to the critical eye of Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor, and he arrived at the same conclusion. The moulding of the face is the same as that in the British Museum, making allowance for the difference in age. In this statue the mouth lacks perfection of beauty; it is over large, and this, we know, was a blemish in Caesar's face. If we com-

<sup>1</sup> Telephron to exact attention: 'Porrigit dexteram et instar oratorum conformat articulum, duobusque infimis conclusis digitis ceteros eminens porrigit.'—Apuleius, *Metamorph.* ii. 21. So also Fulgentius: 'Itaque compositus in dicendi modum, erectis duobus digitis, tertium pollice comprimens, ita verbis exorsus est.'



pare the statue with the most authentic busts, we shall find that the formation of the head, of the ears, of the lips, and the chin are the same. The face lacks that kindliness and sweetness, and that far-away look, that are so noticeable in the portraits taken in later life.<sup>1</sup> The kindliness grew in Caesar as he came to know men well, their weaknesses and infirmities, and to pity and bear with them. Youth is impatient and petulant; old age tolerant and charitable. In this portrait his eyes are fixed on the earth, or on those moving on it. What is a special feature in those of the Caesar of advanced life is a look into far-away space, beyond the horizon, such as I remember to have noticed in no other classic bust.

C. Julius Caesar remained for two years in Rhodes engaged in his studies.

‘During this time,’ says Mr. Froude, ‘the government of Rome was making progress in again demonstrating its unfitness for the duties which were laid upon it, and sowing the seeds which in a few years were to ripen into a harvest so remarkable.

‘Two alternatives only lay before the Roman dominion—either disruption or the abolition of the Constitution. If the aristocracy could not govern, still less could the mob govern. The Latin race was scattered over the basin of the Mediterranean, no longer bound by any special ties to Rome and Italy, each man of it individually vigorous and energetic, and bent before all things on making his own fortune. If no tolerable administration was provided for them at home, their obvious course could only be to identify themselves with local interests and nationalities, and make themselves severally independent. . . . Decent, industrious people in the provinces were given over to have their fortunes stolen from them, their daughters dishonoured, and themselves beaten or killed if they complained, by a set of wolves calling themselves Roman senators—and these scenes not localised to any one unhappy district, but extending through the entire civilised part of mankind. There was no hope for these unhappy people, for they were under the tyranny of a dead hand. A bad king is like a bad season. The next may bring improvement, or, if his rule is wholly intolerable, he can be deposed. Under a bad constitution no such change is possible. It can be ended only by a revolution. Republican Rome had become an imperial state; she had taken upon herself the guardianship of every country in the world, where the human race was industrious and prosperous, and she was discharging her great trust by sacrificing them to the luxury and ambition of a few hundred scandalous politicians.’

In another way the existing condition of affairs was tending to

<sup>1</sup> Bernoulli thinks the likeness is that of a man of forty years. It does not give me the idea of a man of over twenty-eight. The Roman ripened sooner than an inhabitant of the North.

revolution. When a Roman general had gone forth in ancient times at the head of a conscription of Roman citizens, his return meant the dispersion of his soldiers to their farms. But the constitution of the Roman armies had been completely altered. The armies were now composed of mercenaries, and the return of a successful general produced widespread alarm; it was a menace. Would he disperse his soldiers, and, if dispersed, whither would they go? How were they to be properly rewarded? Sulla answered these questions by massacring his political enemies and giving their estates to his soldiers. Others might do the same. Nor were the generals when at the head of their armies abroad amenable to the home government. Sulla had conducted his war against Mithridates in disregard of everything save his own will. Sertorius, appointed to the government of Spain, attempted to establish his independence in the peninsula and relieve it from Roman oppression. A ruffian, L. Licinius Lucullus, sent to Spain, and finding there no war, made one, unauthorised. He wished to gain military reputation and to improve his fortune. Without any commission from the senate, and without any provocation, he fell on the Vaccaei. The central government had no control over their officers abroad, and trembled when they came home. No returning general could fail to see that he had but to put out his hand and grasp the dictatorship, and it was his. If he did not do so, he was lost; the senate would humble and destroy him if it could. Carthage had treated her successful generals as public enemies, and Rome was necessarily falling into the same humour. Success to her armies was almost as dangerous to the Republic as a defeat.

### III.—CAESAR'S CANDIDATURE.

As soon as Caesar was satisfied that he had learned as much as his Greek teacher could give, he returned to Rome. He had been absent two years.

In Rome he lived with his mother in a small house in the Subura, the low part of Rome, under the Viminal and Esquiline hills. It was an unfashionable quarter. It was noisy, and full of traffic.<sup>1</sup> Many taverns were in the street. At the bottom lived the leather-sellers and shoemakers, but there were booksellers in the parallel Vicus Sandaliarius. At the top of the street was the Lacus Orphei, a sort of amphitheatrical depression with seats round it, and at the higher end a statue of Orpheus surrounded by beasts and birds. It was probably a lounging-place for the people wherein to sit on a summer evening and listen to ballad-singers. Here a street branched off to the fashionable Carinae, where, on the slope

A. U. C. 686.

B. C. 74.

Aet. 28.

<sup>1</sup> Martial calls it *clamosa*, and Juvenal, *servens*.

above where now stands the Colosseum, the knights had their residences. Not far off was the Tigillum Sororis, 'the Sister's beam,' a gate of wood, commemorating the act of the last of the three Horatii, who there stabbed his sister because she bewailed the death of her lover, whom he had slain. Along the little street where was this monument, Caesar walked when he visited Pompeius or Cicero, passing on his way the open accursed space where had stood the house of Spurius Cassius, suspected of having aspired to the kingship, torn down and devoted to perpetual desolation.

Caesar was not in good circumstances, and the simple style in which his mother kept house was due almost certainly to straitened means as much as to choice. Sulla had confiscated his paternal inheritance, his wife's dower, and his priestly salary, and none of these had been restored to him, as far as we know. A main object of Lepidus and Brutus had been to obtain the restoration of confiscated estates and incomes, but they had failed to effect it.

Caesar was always devotedly attached to his mother, and he lived with her as long as she remained alive. Indeed she, and not his girlish wife, kept house for him. He showed himself in the Forum, that was hard by, and spoke when occasion offered. We do not know the exact spot where his house stood, but it was probably where he afterwards laid out his forum, buying up the houses round it.

In appearance Caesar was handsome and well-built,<sup>1</sup> had courteous and easy manners, and a graciousness that won the hearts of all who came in contact with him. Cicero notices the fascination of his manner. He was scrupulously neat, even dainty, about his clothing, due to the innate love of order and propriety that marked all he did. When he spoke his style was crystalline, and flowed easily, simply, unladen and unobscured by flowers. When he wrote it was the same, limpid and direct.

He had dark eyes, penetrating, and not soft and ox-like as were those of Pompeius; a straight nose, well bridged. The mouth was regular, but large,<sup>2</sup> or it may be the lips were unduly full. His hair was always kept trimmed by a barber, and his face shaved. So particular was he never to appear with a 'frouzy' chin that some said he had had the hair plucked out; and so careful was he not to ruffle his hair when he scratched his head that he put but one finger through his locks. His voice was sonorous, his gesture when speaking grave and dignified. His complexion was a pale olive; his cheeks never full, in middle life inclined to fall in. He wore his toga ornamented with a purple

<sup>1</sup> 'Forma magna et generosa,' 'forma omnium civium excellentissimus,' says Cicero.

<sup>2</sup> The expression 'ore plenior' of Suetonius is a little vague, as *os* has a double meaning, but in the case of Caesar, whose face was thin, it must apply to the mouth. Plutarch speaks of his thinness, *Caes.* 17. Some have thought it referred to his eloquence, but this is not possible from the context. The passage relates to the personal appearance of Caesar.

stripe of the *cques*, and had it fringed. It was girt, but girt loosely about him. On his finger was his signet-ring engraved with the tutelary *Venus victrix*.

Whilst Caesar had been in Rhodes, his friends at home had not forgotten him. On the vacation of the office of pontiff by his uncle L. Aurelius Cotta, who died suddenly in Gaul, he was given the pontificate; and when he returned to Rome from Rhodes he was elected a military tribune. This gave him military command. He however

remained quiet, and though there were troubles on all sides, in the East, in Spain, and in Italy, where the gladiators were in revolt, Caesar took no part in military affairs. It is indeed probable that he held the office for a very brief period, or he would almost certainly have been called to serve in some of the wars then being carried on.

The year 70 was memorable, for it saw the repeal of some of Sulla's most important alterations in the Constitution. Pompeius and Crassus

were consuls. The former had been one of Sulla's steady supporters, but his success in war, due mainly to his luck, had roused the jealousy of the aristocratic party, and Pompeius, partly through irritation at their hostility, partly out of love of applause, turned towards the *populares*, and released by their aid the Tribunician authority from all the trammels imposed on it by Sulla. He had thereby knocked out the foundation-stone on which Sulla's constitution rested; and he did it without in the least knowing the



FIG. 8.—CN. POMPEIUS MAGNUS. Coin, enlarged.

importance of what he was about. Pompeius, in pursuance of his object to punish the senate for their jealousy, sought to restore to the knights their control over the judicial system, but over this the senate fought a desperate battle; and finally a compromise was effected whereby a court was erected, composed in part of members of the senate, in part of knights, and the third part of members elected from the class of *Tribuni aerarii*. Thus a second breach had been effected in Sulla's constitution, and that by Pompeius, a member of the senatorial party, an adherent of Sulla, to gratify his pique.



Cnaeus Pompeius belonged to a plebeian family. He was six years older than Caesar, and a few months younger than Cicero. At the age of three-and-twenty he had been given the name of Magnus, 'the Great,' by Sulla—one is inclined to suppose in jest, but it was accepted in sober earnest. Yet never was a man less qualified to bear the title. He was a successful man in war, because he came in to terminate campaigns in which the hard fighting had been done by others; he wore the laurels others had reaped. The secret of his success was that he seldom risked a battle till he had made certain of victory. He was saved from utter rout in Spain by Metellus. He was handsome, had courteous manners, and was rich. Cicero in vain sought to fathom his purposes, to discover his principles. But Pompeius had no principles, and his purposes never lay far afield. By his antecedents he was the representative of the aristocracy, yet for the sake of applause he dealt his order its death-wound. Plutarch speaks of his engaging countenance, his princely air, and ready accessibility. He had curly hair, and, as has been already said, soft eyes. He is held to have been honest; and moderate in his diet. The story is told of him that once, when ill, he was ordered a thrush for his meal. None could be procured in the market, but he was informed that Lucullus had thrushes in his aviary. But Lucullus was of all men the one to whom he did not wish to be beholden, and he refused to ask for one of the birds, saying, 'What! is my life to hang on the luxury of Lucullus? Cook me something else.'

On his finger he bore as his signet the device of a lion bearing a sword.

The face of Pompeius is known for certain by the profiles on the coins. The characteristics are a tuft of hair bunching out over his forehead, a face very straight from brow to chin, with a nose but slightly projecting beyond this line, the nose ill bridged, the nostrils drawn up as though he were taking snuff, and there are creases from the nostril roots to the chin, the latter inclined to be double. The lips are tightly closed, with an affectation of firmness, forming creases that start from the nostrils, and give a puffy look to the lips. This must have been a peculiarity of Pompeius, for it is exaggerated on some of the coins. As to busts and statues of Pompeius, though there are many so labelled, there is not one that can with confidence be asserted really to represent him, and perhaps least of all can this be said of the statue in the Palazzo Spada, of which it is by no means certain whence the head came that has been affixed to the figure, exhumed without one. Perhaps the bust that has most claim to be regarded as a portrait of Pompeius is that found in 1869 in Pompeii, now in the National Museum at Naples.

Directly that Pompeius showed readiness to adopt liberal measures, Caesar was at his side, and warmly seconded him. Caesar was now elected quaestor, and obtained a seat in the senate. Soon after this his

aunt Julia, the widow of Marius, died. We do not know much of this lady. At the time when the Teutons threatened Italy she accompanied her husband, taking with her a Syrian prophetess, who dressed herself in purple, and bore in her hand a staff wreathed with flowers and fluttering with ribbons. C. Marius and Julia, with the prophetess Martha between them, are represented on a stone at Les Baux in Provence, near the spot where Marius had his camp. The monument was apparently erected by C. Coelius Caldus, one of his lieutenants.

On the occasion of the funeral of Julia, Caesar produced the bust of Marius, in defiance of the law of Sulla prohibiting its exposure, and pronounced her panegyric, as, in later days, did Augustus over another Julia, Caesar's sister. In the same year he made an oration over his wife Cornelia, who died. It was unusual that young matrons should be thus honoured, but Caesar's attachment to Cornelia, and respect for her memory, induced him to violate the custom, and popular sentiment approved. For this woman, it was remembered, he had risked his life, and suffered the spoiling of his goods.

The pirates had been rapidly increasing in numbers and in audacity since the death of Sulla. They swept the Mediterranean with their war-galleys, and even the armies of Rome cowered before them, not venturing to cross from Brundisium except under the protection of winter storms. Commerce was paralysed, the cities on the coast menaced, and the corn supply for the capital was jeopardised.

That Rome could recover possession of the seas was not doubted, but the senate shrank from committing to any man the command of a sufficient navy. There was, indeed, in popular opinion but one man capable of coping with the pirates, and this man was an object of suspicion already. At length, when the pirates had had the temerity to enter Ostia, the port of Rome, and carry off the inhabitants to slavery; when they had sunk in mid-seas a Roman fleet under the orders of a consul, and had made two praetors prisoners; when they had burned Gaeta, and had seized and held to ransom ambassadors of foreign States to the Republic: the people rose with loud cries, demanding the suppression of these insolent marauders, and accused the senate of being in league with the pirates, of receiving pay from them to defeat every measure taken to obtain redress for the wrongs done by them.

In the midst of a tumult of excitement among the people, fearing lest the supplies of bread should be cut off, the tribune Gabinius proposed a bill to empower a man of consular rank to collect a fleet of two hundred sail and proceed against the pirates, with command for three years. But the senate preferred that the scandal and danger to the city should continue rather than that such power should be put into the hands of Pompeius, and they offered to the bill the most strenuous opposition. However, the blood of the commonalty was up.

A. U. C. 686.

B. C. 68.

Act. 34.

A. U. C. 687.

B. C. 67.

Act. 35.

They caught the consul Piso, one of the most stubborn opponents of the bill, and would have torn him to pieces had not Gabinius interfered. Caesar now issued from his retirement, and with all the energy of his character urged the carrying of the bill. He knew by his own experience both the daring of these freebooters and the ease with which they could be put down. The measure was carried to the vote of the tribes, whereupon the tribune Trebellius, gained by the senate, interposed his *velo*. The people at once threatened to deprive him of his office, and carried their measure in improved shape, for they voted further supplies than had been at first demanded, and Pompeius was named as invested with the office of putting an end to piracy.

Caesar's anticipations were verified. Pompeius had no sooner appeared on the high seas than the pirates gave way. He pursued them to their quarters without difficulty, almost without resistance, and burnt their fleets. Whilst thus engaged, news reached Pompeius that he had been appointed to another command. Mithridates, king of Pontus, had defied the forces of the Republic, and taxed its resources for twenty-four years. Lucullus had been sent against him, and had driven the king out of Pontus, and had pursued him into Armenia. But the knights, the financiers, had no love for Lucullus, who forbade their exactions and protected the population of Asia against the tax-farmers and usurers of Rome, who had seized and sold the wives and children of such as could not meet their demands. Accordingly the knights at home combined to effect his recall, whilst their agents in Asia stirred up disaffection among his soldiers, so that, unsupported by fresh troops from Italy, and with those he commanded in mutiny, Lucullus was forced to retire, and at once received his recall. Thereupon the people demanded that the conduct of the Asian war should be intrusted to Pompeius. The senate, of course, resisted; better lose Asia than put such a weapon into the hands of Pompeius, nevertheless the people insisted on their point, and it was finally conceded.

In the same year that Pompeius went against the pirates, Caesar, as quaestor, accompanied the praetor, Antistius Verus, into Spain, and had an opportunity of seeing a province still bleeding under wanton misusage. As delegate of Verus he visited the various towns, administering justice, and everywhere left behind him a favourable opinion of his spirit of equity and conciliation that did not rapidly fade away.

A story told of this period may be safely rejected as an after fabrication. It is said that on seeing a statue of Alexander he sighed to think that he had done nothing at an age when Alexander had conquered the world.

From Spain Caesar returned at the end of a year to Italy, but halted in Cisalpine Gaul, the present Lombardy. The colonies founded in this country had been vainly entreating for the rights of Roman citizenship that had been accorded to Italy south of the Po. Caesar's

sympathies were enlisted ; he encouraged the hopes of the inhabitants, hopes which were realised afterwards by full citizenship, obtained by Caesar for them ; now, however, the senate took umbrage, accused him of stirring up the Transpadane Gauls to ask for what could never be granted, and detained in Italy two of the legions equipped for the East, on the excuse that they mistrusted Caesar, were uneasy at the agitation in Cisalpine Gaul, actually because they were jealous of Pompeius's success, and desired to cripple him as Lucullus had been crippled and made innocuous.

In this year Caesar married Pompeia, daughter of Q. Pompeius Rufus, a member of another branch of the Pompeian clan than that to which Pompeius Magnus belonged. The mother of Pompeia was Cornelia, daughter of the dictator Sulla.

For 65 Caesar was elected curule aedile along with one Bibulus, a man devoted heart and soul to the senatorial faction. The aediles were the managers of the amusements of the people, and had care of the public buildings. No salary was attached to the office, which had become a very costly one, as every aedile was expected to lavish large sums on games and on the adornment of the city, without which his prospects of advancement to a higher office were few. The electors were bribed by the aedile with a view to his candidature for the praetorship and consulship. To be chosen aedile a man must be at least thirty-seven, and he could not aspire to be praetor till the age of forty, nor to be consul till he had attained forty-three. But the aedileship was a necessary step to be taken by an aspirant to the highest offices, and Caesar must so use it as to secure his future rise. His means were moderate ; he was still deprived of his patrimony ; but he had friends who believed in and trusted him, and they advanced the necessary sums. Caesar gave shows of extraordinary splendour, adorned the capital with a colonnade, and erected a temple to the Sacred Twins. Bibulus had indeed contributed his share to the expenses ; but the people attributed all to Caesar. 'I see,' said Bibulus, 'it is with us as with the Dioscuri : every one speaks of the Temple of Castor, and forgets to name his fellow, Pollux.'

Now that Caesar was curator of the public monuments he restored the trophies of his uncle Marius. Sulla had attempted to efface the remembrance of the deliverer of Italy and Rome from the last great invasion of the barbarians. He had forced a law through the comitia forbidding the exhibition of a bust of Marius ; every memorial of his victories was levelled with the dust, and the ashes of the great general were torn from their sepulchre and scattered to the winds. Caesar had been kindly treated by the old man ; from him he had received his first piece of preferment. The memory of Marius deserved rehabilitation. The trophies of very little generals and very great rascals adorned the Capitol and Rome. There was a 'monumentum Catuli,' there was a



portico on the Palatine in commemoration of the general who had been beaten by the Cimbri and had lost his camp, and who was saved from annihilation on the fields of Vercellae by the help of Marius. And it was a capital crime to show the bust and arms of the latter.

Caesar restored the trophies on the Capitol, commemorative of the victories of Aquae Sextiae and Vercellae, to the delight of the people, and amidst the tears of the veterans who had fought under the great general in the two most glorious days in their lives. The senate was furious. Q. Lutatius Catulus, son of the colleague of Marius at Vercellae, leaped from his seat and denounced Caesar as a transgressor of the law. In his rage he burst into a torrent of extravagant nonsense. The exhibition of the Cimbric and Teutonic trophies, said he, was 'an attempt to beat down the constitution with battering-rams.'

The senate was willing enough to condemn the act of Caesar, but the temper of the people would not suffer the removal of the replaced monuments. It took a mean revenge. Caesar was embarrassed for money; he solicited an appointment that would transfer him to Egypt, where he might fill his empty purse. The senate refused his request, and then, to show its malevolence, aimed a blow at his clients, certain that he would feel it keenly. A decree was passed to expel from Rome all aliens sojourning in the city; it was a slap in the face levelled at the Cisalpine Gauls resident in the capital pressing for the privileges of citizenship.

Caesar retaliated. He was entitled to preside in the court to which were referred charges of murder, and in this capacity he had some of Sulla's ruffians brought before his tribunal. But he did not stop there. He was resolved to teach the nobles a lesson that the lives of the citizens were sacred, and were not to be taken away recklessly. By the ancient constitution the citizen who had been condemned in court might appeal to the people. But during the last seventy years all safeguards had been cast aside, and blood had been spilled as water in the faction feuds. Tiberius Gracchus had had his brains knocked out with the leg of a stool. Its weight in gold had been given for the head of his brother.

Riot and butchery had been the order of the day. Each party, on getting the upper hand, had washed its hands in the blood of the adversary. Caesar determined to recall the Romans to a sense of responsibility for such acts, and for this purpose he took an extreme case, and one that touched and affected both parties. There was an old fellow, Rabinus by name, who thirty-six years before had been involved in one of these broils, in which L. Saturninus, tribune of the people, had been murdered. Saturninus had headed the ultra-revolutionaries, and his revolt had been put down by C. Marius himself and the moderate democrats. In the riot Saturninus had been killed off-hand without a trial. This was the case taken up by Caesar; and the lesson he designed that it should convey was that length of time since

a deed of illegal violence had been committed did not guarantee the guilty against punishment.

Cicero undertook the defence of Rabirius. C. Julius Caesar and his kinsman Lucius Caesar were judges. The charge was capital. Rabirius was condemned, and appealed to the people. They, however, would have ratified the condemnation had not his life been saved by an expedient, probably suggested by Caesar, who had no desire that blood should be shed. It was customary for a white flag to fly on the Janiculan Hill. When that was hauled down it was a token that the city was menaced by invaders. Metellus Celer, a praetor, seeing that the people were resolved on the rejection of the appeal, ran to the hill and lowered the flag. The assembly was at once dissolved, and never reassembled to reconsider the case of Rabirius.

Caesar next stood forward in vindication of justice to the Allobroges, a Gallic people seated on the Upper Rhone, who had been pillaged by the proconsul, Cn. Calpurnius Piso. Caesar impeached him, Cicero defended him, and the interested judges, as a matter of course, acquitted him.

Q. Lutatius Catulus was a member of the senatorial party; in the general mediocrity of talent there, and deficiency of principle, he was esteemed as something extraordinary. He had sufficient intelligence to warn him that the extreme men on the right wing were likely to ruin the cause, and to perceive that in the matter of the law-courts some concession must be made to the demands of the people that the administration of justice should be purified. But he was obstinate, suspicious, and tricky. Catulus had been bitterly mortified at the success of Caesar in maintaining the Marian trophies after he had restored them. This he regarded as a defiance of his order, and as a slight cast on his father, whom the oligarchical clique insisted on regarding as the real victor over the Cimbri. He had opposed the Gabinian bill for sending Pompeius against the pirates, and had been beaten; he had again opposed the Manilian bill conferring on the same general the conduct of the war in Asia, and had again been beaten. That 'beardless dandy' Caesar had met him at every point and had defeated him. He was now to encounter a more galling disappointment.

Q. Metellus had been Pontifex Maximus, and he died. Catulus and Servilius Vatia Isauricus stood forward as candidates. Catulus was sure  
A.U.C. 691.  
 B.C. 63.  
 Aet. 39. of the votes of the nobility, and of such as they could influence with their money. Elections were managed in Rome now by agents who had gangs of voters in their pay. Servilius hoped that past services rendered to the Republic would count with the people. The Servilian gens had as their palladium a small copper token, that was supposed to expand and contract with the fortunes of the family. Servilius probably had not consulted the coin when he stood for the high-priesthood. Suddenly, to the surprise and disgust of both candi-

dates, Caesar appeared in the field against them. Catulus contemptuously sent him an offer to pay his debts if he would withdraw from the contest. Caesar rejected the insulting offer and appealed to the people. He could not buy their votes: his funds and credit were exhausted; but he reckoned on their dissatisfaction with oligarchic misrule. He did not disguise from himself that on this contest he staked his future. If he failed, the senatorial party would find or forge weapons for his destruction. On the day of the election, his mother, Aurelia, with tears, accompanied him to the door of the little house in the Subura. It seemed to her that the nobility and the electoral wire-pullers would be too much for him. But Caesar trusted that the people could be spasmodically just and generous. 'Mother,' said he, 'to-day I shall return as chief pontiff, or not at all.'

The narrow streets were dense with voters streaming to the place of election. The shoemakers had closed their shops. The stalls in the great market (Macellum) were deserted; men half-tipsy, loud with protestations of good-will, tumbled out of the taverns as Caesar passed. The butchers had left their shambles, the fishmongers their shops; the Argiletum that opened on the Comitium was thick with people.

Caesar was elected over the heads of Catulus and Servilius, carried into office by a wave of genuine popular enthusiasm for the one and only man in Rome who cared for the commonwealth above his own selfish interests.

Caesar now removed to the official residence of the pontiff in the Forum, not many steps from the spot where, a few years later, his funeral pyre would burn, and where a temple was to rise to his honour, the concrete walls of which still remain.

Soon after, Caesar was chosen praetor for the ensuing year, having now reached the age at which he could legally assume that office, and the way to the consulship was open.

But Piso, whom he had impeached, and Catulus, whom he had defeated, vowed vengeance; and an opportunity soon offered at which they grasped. In the next year Cicero was consul. There had existed for some time a simmering dissatisfaction among the young nobles at the condition of affairs. It is difficult to get at the truth in this matter, but it is probable that the discontent arose from financial difficulties. The leader of the malcontents was Catilina, a man of ability, determination, and singular charm of manner. He belonged to an ancient patrician family that had sunk into poverty. Moreover, he had been a zealous partisan of Sulla. Perhaps he considered that the plums had been put into other mouths, and sought a disturbance of the public peace, in order that he might snatch them for his own eating. With him was associated C. Antonius Hybrida, an officer of Sulla who had been left behind in Greece, which he had plundered ruthlessly, and had been impeached for it by Caesar. He was now Cicero's colleague in the

consulship, and could look forward to a province to despoil, so that it is not clear what advantage he could gain by the conspiracy of Catilina. There were others : Cassius, who had stood unsuccessfully for the consulship ; Bestia, a tribune-elect ; Lentulus and Cethegus, members of the Cornelian house, and the two nephews of Sulla. A good deal of loose talk about a conspiracy got about, but nothing definite was known ; many entirely disbelieved in the existence of a plot, though they admitted that there were well-born grumblers disappointed at being out of office. This had been going on for some time. Finally, under the consulship of Cicero and Antonius, the conspiracy came, or was forced, to a head.

Unhappily we know of the designs of the conspirators only from the pens of the most incompetent of historians, Sallust, and the most untrustworthy of advocates, Cicero, and it is impossible to elicit from their accounts the truth relative to the designs of, and measures taken by, the confederates. These are charged with purposing to overthrow the government, to extend the franchise to Cisalpine Gaul, and to set fire to and pillage the capital. The government was corrupt and incompetent, and might well be recast. The extension of citizenship was but a justice. To burn Rome certainly never entered into the heads of the conspirators. That was an accusation trumped up by Cicero, who, in order to effect the destruction of the malcontents, must charge them with something that would strike the imagination and rouse the fears of the citizens. The people could not be excited by the denunciation of these men as desiring to subvert an incapable government ; the extension of the franchise was a proposal that no longer awoke their alarm ; but their selfish fears were at once enlisted against Catilina and his crew when they were represented as would-be cut-throats, robbers, and incendiaries. The conduct of Cicero, moreover, with regard to the conspiracy, was such as to waken mistrust as to its having attained any coherency at all. He pretended to have damning proofs of guilt in his hands, and tried threats, even entreaties, to induce Catilina to declare himself the enemy of Rome by leaving it and flying to arms.<sup>1</sup> Yet all the while he had no better evidence than the chatter of a loose woman, the mistress of one of the pretended conspirators. Her story, tricked out with all the adornments her lively imagination could furnish, found an eager and uncritical hearer in Cicero, who was delighted to have a plot to unveil, so that he might posture before Rome as its saviour. But even this woman's romance was not sufficiently extravagant to satisfy Cicero, and he added to it colours of his own, expanding the plot into a panorama of a city in flames, given over to massacre and incendiarism, that curdled the blood of his hearers. When Rome had been worked up to a paroxysm of panic over this marvellous 'revelation,' the nobility seized

<sup>1</sup> 'What real traitor did you ever expose?' 'Did you not destroy in disgraceful manner Catilina who asked for nothing more than an office?' So did Q. Fufius Calenus say later, to Cicero. Dio. xlv. 10, 20.



the occasion to accuse Caesar of complicity in it. Catulus and Piso urged on Cicero to include his name in the list of the conspirators. They were ready, with suborned witnesses, to furnish false testimony against him. But Cicero, though a vain man, was not a scoundrel, and he hesitated. Caesar had himself been the first to give him information that some plot was hatching; and to destroy him merely because he was distasteful to the oligarchy on a false charge was what Cicero's conscience would not suffer.<sup>1</sup>

On the 2nd of December none of the conspirators were in the hands of Cicero; he had had nothing in the way of evidence hitherto, except a woman's untrustworthy talk, on which to base a capital charge. But now Catilina had been driven by fear to leave Rome, and those left behind, in alarm for themselves, had entered into negotiations with some delegates of the Allobroges, then leaving Rome. These men were caught and the letters taken from them. Now, finally, Cicero had what he wanted. There was treasonable correspondence with the Gauls, and this was in his hands. Never did a prouder day dawn on the vain orator. He convened the senate to decide what was to be done. But no regular court was constituted, no jury detailed, no fair trial accorded the accused. The senate, indeed, had no legal authority to sit as a tribunal of justice, not even to appoint a commission to try the alleged conspirators who were now arrested. But Cicero and his party were afraid to trust the conduct of the case out of their hands, and to suffer the hollowness of the charge to be discovered. They rushed to a capital condemnation with indecent precipitancy. Didius Silanus, consul-elect, was for a death-sentence, so apparently were Catulus and Piso, who bitterly resented the weakness of Cicero in not implicating Caesar in the charge. Then it came to the turn of Caesar himself to speak. 'Those,' said he, 'who deliberate on difficult matters ought to free their minds from the influence of hatred, friendship, anger, and compassion; for the mind is often blinded to the truth by the clouds of passion that arise, and no man has ever followed his heated feelings and his true interest at the same time.' He bade the fathers lay aside all personal rancour, and consider only what was exacted of them by justice. Their mode of proceeding, he contended, was unusual, as it was illegal. There were regularly constituted criminal courts; let the accused be tried in them, and accorded a fair chance of clearing their reputations. Silanus had given his opinion with perfect honesty, and had urged death; but in so doing he

<sup>1</sup> No conspiracy is so puzzling as this of Catilina. We cannot see that he pretended to belong to any one of the existing parties in Rome. He was not a Conservative. He was attacked and destroyed by a combination of the Optimates. He was not a Liberal; his principal supporters were the friends and veterans of Sulla, who hated the Marian party. The offer of extension of franchise to the Italians was made only at the last, as a desperate expedient. Probably Catilina desired a dictatorship for himself, like that of Sulla, for purely selfish ends, to enrich himself and his adherents by a new proscription. That the sympathy of Caesar can have been enlisted in behalf of such a scheme is a moral impossibility.

had violated the fundamental constitution of the State. 'Why,' he asked of Silanus, 'did you not propose that these men should be whipped first and executed after? Because, forsooth, the Porcian law forbids the whipping of a Roman citizen. But are there not laws that equally forbid the putting a man to death untried, unconvicted? To sentence men capitally who have not been tried by the ordinary and legal process was to create a bad precedent. It was possible enough that in this particular case no wrong might be done, because, doubtless, the accused deserved death. But how might it be under another consul? Who was to fix the bounds to which the shedding of blood was to be permitted, independent of a trial? Another consul, less scrupulously just than Cicero, might arise, and the senate be moved by unreasoning panic or by its animosities to commit frightful injustice.' Caesar spoke with caution. He knew that he was surrounded by enemies seeking his destruction, but his words were so forcible that he swayed the majority of his hearers. He even shook the resolution of Silanus. Tiberius Nero moved an adjournment, and Silanus expressed his readiness to vote for the motion of Nero. Cicero spoke next. He allowed his hearers to understand that he desired the summary execution of the accused, but that he was afraid to take the responsibility on himself. Caesar had warned him that the people were sure to commiserate the victims of a lawless judgment, he had given timely notice, by the prosecution of Rabirius, that the illegal murder of citizens subjected those who committed such acts to lifelong risk. The wise and humane speech of Caesar would certainly have withheld the senate from plunging into a great mistake had it not been for the interference of a wrong-headed but sincere man, M. Porcius Cato, now tribune-elect, who rushed into the debate to drown the voice of Caesar, and neutralise the effect of his words by an appeal to the fears of the senate. 'Verily,' he exclaimed, 'your leniency will lead to ultimate sorrow. Are you afraid of doing your manifest duty? By want of spirit you are letting everything slide. It is not by vows and by womanish tears that we get the help of the gods. Success follows promptitude. Yield to fear of future consequences, hesitate, and the gods in disgust will turn their backs on you.'

When Cato reseated himself, a large part of the senate applauded, and like weak men clung to a strong if stupid man, and voted the death of the conspirators. It was during this debate that an incident occurred which is related by Plutarch. A note was slipped into the hand of Caesar. Cato saw it and tried to raise suspicion against the recipient, and demanded that the letter should be read aloud. Thereupon Caesar handed the note over to Cato, who found it to be a love-letter from his own half-sister, Servilia, to Caesar. He threw it back angrily to Caesar, with, 'Take it, you drunkard!'

The story is improbable as it stands. It was assuredly unlikely that a lady should send a love-billet in the most public manner possible,

before the eyes of her husband and brother. That there is some truth in the anecdote is however probable; and we may conjecture that what really took place was that a note was handed to Caesar which, when required, he passed on to Cato, and that it really had reference to a consignment of wine from his wine-merchant. Thus only is the exclamation intelligible: 'Take it, you drunkard!' for Caesar was notoriously temperate. But the enemies of Caesar, or the general scandalmongers, were not satisfied with this, and conjectured that the letter contained something piquant. Who would have divulged the contents of a love-letter? Not Caesar certainly. Not Cato, to reveal the dishonour of his sister.

No sooner had the senate empowered Cicero to put the prisoners to death, than they were forthwith strangled. 'Vixerunt,' was the answer Cicero gave as he met the inquiring looks of the people in his passage through the Forum. The nobles, ill-satisfied that Cicero had not enveloped Caesar in the accusation, sought to relieve themselves of him by violence. As he descended the steps of the temple where the senate had assembled, he was assailed by certain knights with drawn swords, and they looked eagerly to the consul for a signal to hew him in pieces. Cicero held back from encouragement of violence, and Curio, a young friend of Caesar, had time to throw his cloak around him and convey him to a place of safety.

On January 1st, in the new year, Caesar entered on the praetorship to which he had been elected, and he began it with a passage of arms with his enemy, Catulus. This man had been intrusted with public money for the completion of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol. It was nearly ready, and Caesar called on Catulus to produce his accounts. Further, as Pompeius had sent home large contributions for the temple, he desired that the name of Pompeius, who had supplied the funds, rather than Catulus, who had merely supervised the expenditure, should be affixed to the building. The proposal was ingenious. It was a trap laid for the aristocracy, and it was one they fell into at once. They rushed to the defence of their representative, and defeated the motion of Caesar. That mattered nothing to him. He had provoked the opposite faction into casting a slight on Pompeius, who had now finished the war in the East, and was returning homewards at the head of his legions. A very general apprehension existed as to what he would do. His army was devoted to him. There was no one capable of resisting him if he elected to be dictator like Sulla. Neither the oligarchy nor the democracy knew his policy. He had swayed from side to side. It was at this critical juncture that Caesar caught him by his weakness, and skilfully contrived to make the senatorial party act in such a manner as to ruffle his temper. The men capable of throwing themselves into a pitfall dug before their eyes were capable of any folly. To this they added other

A. U. C. 692.  
B. C. 62.  
Act. 40.

blunders. Catilina was at large, between Faesulae and Pistoria, at the head of a large force made up of the discontented provincials of Northern Italy. Metellus Nepos, a returned officer of Pompeius, sent before to feel the pulse of the government and the people, proposed that Pompeius should be invited to put down Catilina. Cato opposed this motion energetically. There was a tumult. Metellus Nepos had been elected tribune. He and Caesar addressed the people on the proposal from the platform before the temple of the Twins. Cato and Thermus, both tribunes, jostled their way through the crowd, ascended the steps and the temple, and Cato flung himself into the seat between Caesar and Metellus, and snatched the bill rudely from the hand of the latter. Metellus recited his motion from memory, whereupon Thermus fell on him and covered his mouth with his hands. Sticks and stones flew about. But the senatorial party had hired a gang of cut-throats, and these burst through the people, and drove Metellus from the Forum. Flushed with success, the senate hastily assembled and deposed Metellus and Caesar from their offices, an exercise of authority that was illegal. Metellus fled to Asia to pour his complaints into the ear of Pompeius. Caesar treated his deprivation as illegal, and continued to sit in his court. Then the senate threatened to close it by force. Caesar yielded immediately, and retired to his house in the Via Sacra. But the mob, full of exasperation, rolled through the Forum roaring for him to come forth. Their voices, their threats, reached the senate sitting hard by, and their hearts quailed. Cato ran out and screamed to the people that an additional largess of corn would be given them. They disregarded the proffered bribe, and continued to clamour for Caesar. Then the panic-stricken senate sent to reinstate him in his praetorship, and to thank him for not having come out of his house at the call of the people. 'We hardly know,' says Mr. George Long, 'which to admire most, the precipitate haste with which the senate illegally removed Caesar from his praetorship, or the eagerness with which they seized the opportunity of undoing what they had done.'

The oligarchical party were alarmed at the manner in which they had, by their own stupidity, thrown Caesar and Pompeius together, and they now sought to sow estrangement between them by truly characteristic means. Before his return to Italy, Pompeius had sent letters of divorce to his wife, Mucia, whom he had married on the death of Aemilia. He assigned no reason for this. 'But the reason,' says Plutarch, 'is mentioned in Cicero's letters.' We do not discover it in any that are extant. The senatorial party now spread scandalous reports relative to Caesar and Mucia, but the purpose to be served by the circulation is so obvious that we cannot doubt it was a calumny. If Mucia had been unfaithful, she would hardly have been sought in marriage, immediately after her divorce, by M. Aemilius Scaurus, brother to Pompeius's first wife. Men of position and respectability do not lightly take to



them wanton wives. It seems inconceivable that Pompeius should have believed what was brought diligently to his ears, for he almost immediately sought a close alliance with Caesar by marrying his daughter Julia.

The close of Caesar's year as praetor was marked by a scandal in his own house. It was customary in Rome for a festival to be observed some time about the beginning of December in honour of the Good Goddess, and it was a festival specially for women. The Bona Dea was the same as Maïa, who has given her name to the most beautiful month of the year. She was regarded in Rome as the goddess of virginal purity and of matronly virtue. In December a sacrifice with prayer for the welfare of the Roman people was performed by women only in the house of the highest public functionary. The rites were enveloped in the profoundest secrecy, and consequently excited the curiosity of the idle and inquisitive.

In the December that closed the year of Caesar's office as praetor, the festival of the Good Goddess was performed in his house, under the auspices of his mother, Aurelia; and Caesar, as well as all the men of the household, left the place free to the women, and betook themselves elsewhere. Now it happened that one Publius Clodius, a notoriously dissolute fellow, and a demagogue, but of patrician rank, had fallen in love with Pompeia, Caesar's wife, or was thought to have done so. Aurelia, however, kept so strict a watch that Clodius was unable to communicate with her. He determined to attempt an interview during the celebration of the rites of the Bona Dea, and assuming the dress of a female lute-player went to the house, and was admitted by a female slave named Abra, whom he had bribed to act as go-between. Abra thrust him into her room and ran off to tell her mistress. Whilst she was absent, another girl entered the chamber, and seeing the minstrel there addressed her, and asked what she wanted. Clodius said he was waiting for Abra. His voice betrayed his sex; the girl ran off, screaming that there was a man in the house. Aurelia at once stopped the religious ceremony, veiled the mysteries of the goddess, and at the head of a troop of maid-servants hustled Clodius out into the street.

The incident produced much talk in Rome. The story was told as it has been given above, but there is an element of improbability about it, which makes us doubt whether we have the true version of the incident. That Clodius did penetrate into Caesar's house is certain, but his object was most probably inquisitiveness, and the act was a foolish frolic. It is unlikely that a lover would seek a meeting with his mistress when the house was full of women and given over to festivity. Clodius was peculiarly obnoxious to the nobility, and they saw in this freak an opportunity of ruining him. Political capital could be made out of his act, and the matter of the profanation of the mysteries was referred to the pontifical college of which Caesar was

head. The college gave its opinion that an offence against religion had been committed, which was actionable. Clodius was accordingly put on his trial, and Caesar divorced Pompeia.

#### IV.—CAESAR AND POMPEIUS.

AFTER five years' absence from Italy—years of great military success and renown,—Pompeius had landed at Brundisium with the main body of his army, which he had so often led to victory. A general fear thrilled through all hearts: he would pursue the same course as Sulla, march with his legions to Rome, and establish himself as dictator. Crassus, the wealthy, who bore Pompeius a grudge, which he supposed the conqueror of the East returned, withdrew from the capital with his children and all his moveable property. The senators quaked, conscious that they had offended the great man, and the mob were not particularly desirous to have their lawlessness controlled by the hand of a soldier who would enforce obedience and order. But Pompeius adopted a course which surprised everybody. He disbanded his soldiers and travelled to Rome attended by a small escort only, such as might have accompanied any private gentleman. His conduct was prompted by his inordinate vanity. Puffed up with pride at his successes—and he had been successful everywhere—he thought he could take his place in Rome as the controlling power, before whom all conditions would bend, without a force of armed men at his back. He wished to show himself a greater man than Sulla, who owed his dictatorship to his veterans, and to the terror caused by massacre and proscription. He did not desire to be dictator, for he sought ease after his campaigns, but he certainly expected to be the predominating power in the State, and had no clear idea as to the direction in which he would turn his energies.

The year had opened under very unpleasant auspices to Caesar. A *cause célèbre* was about to come off, in which the privacy of his house would be laid bare to the prying eyes of the prurient, and to all his political adversaries. After the college of pontiffs had pronounced their judgment, the senate resolved that the consuls should propose a bill in the assembly of the people to bring Clodius to justice, and to authorise a departure from the ordinary form of trial. The bill enacted that instead of the jurymen being chosen by lot, which would give Clodius a chance of escape, as the jurymen might be accessible to bribes, the praetor should select a certain number of men for whose character he would be responsible. This led to violent opposition. It was understood that the trial was a political contest. The senatorial party sought the destruction of Clodius, and to effect this sought means to pack the jury. Of the two consuls, Piso took the part of Clodius, and did his utmost to get the bill rejected. The other consul, Messala,

on the contrary, strongly pressed for it. Caesar took no active part on either side. The senate stood firm, and finally a compromise was reached that satisfied neither party. The trial came on, and Caesar was summoned by the prosecutor as witness. He said, and said truly, that he knew nothing about the matter. He had left the house before the beginning of the ceremony. 'If you know nothing of the matter,'

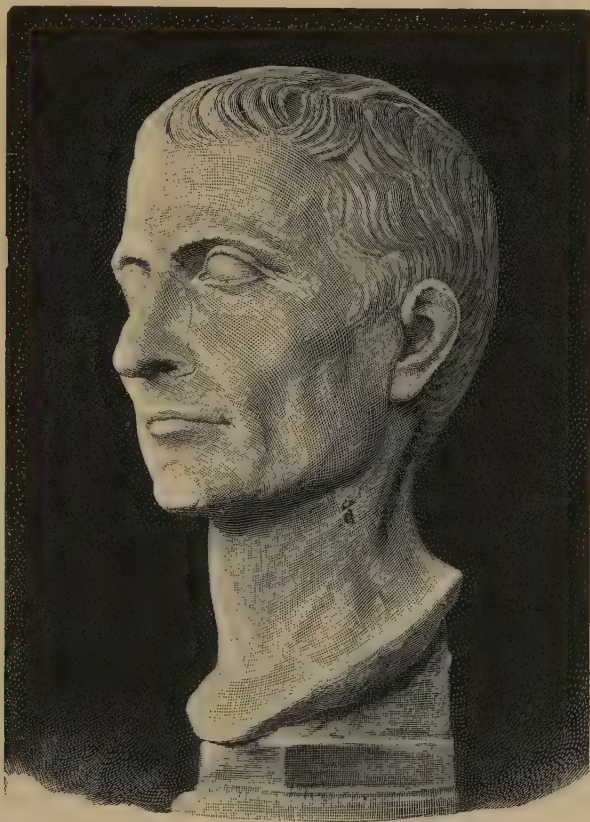


FIG. 9.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the Campo Santo, Pisa.

retorted the prosecutor, 'why did you divorce Pompeia?' 'Caesar's wife must be above suspicion,' was the haughty answer.

The great trial ended in the acquittal of Clodius. It was said, and no doubt truly, that vast sums had been spent in bribery of the jury, fifty-six in number, but political feeling unquestionably entered largely into the determination of the votes. M. Licinius Crassus, the richest man in Rome, was pointed out as he who had furnished the money to corrupt the judges.

At this point we may consider the charges of immorality brought



against Caesar, who is said to have entered into intimate relations with some of the noblest dames of Rome : with Mucia, the wife of Pompeius ; with Tertulla, the wife of Crassus ; with Lollia, the wife of Gabinius ; with Postumia, the wife of Servius Sulpicius ; and especially with Servilia, sister of Cato and wife of D. Junius Silanus.

It is remarkable that the intrigues with which he is credited were with the wives of those very men whose friendship and co-operation it was his interest to secure. A man situated as he was, full of personal ambition, as he is supposed to have been, consummate in craft, would, one might think, be wiser than to commit the incredible folly of seeking his mistresses among the wives of the most powerful men in Rome, whom it was his interest to conciliate. But it is quite certain that it was to the interest of the senatorial party to sow seeds of discord between Caesar and Pompeius, and Crassus, and Scaurus, and Gabinius, and no more effective means of so doing could be found than by spreading reports that Caesar had dishonoured their wives, and broken the sanctity of their homes. We may almost certainly conclude that the tale of Caesar's relations with Mucia are false. She was a middle-aged lady, the mother of three children ; and that Pompeius did not believe the slander is made probable by the fact that his relations to Caesar became more cordial and intimate after the divorce of Mucia. Tertulla, the wife of Crassus, did not bear a very high character ; her eldest son was so like in face to the senator Axius, that the story circulated that she had been unfaithful to her husband. But Crassus came forward, when Caesar was in difficulties, and unable to leave Rome for his propraetorship because of his debts, and advanced him the money he wanted, which was an enormous sum, and we can hardly suppose he would have done this to the man who had trifled with his wife's honour. Lollia, wife of Gabinius, is perhaps the person of whom Cicero writes (*Ad Famil.* ix. 22), as a woman of abandoned character. Gabinius himself was a fop and a profligate, and a man of such bad character is not unlikely to have driven his wife into vicious ways. But whatever his private character was, he was a man of considerable political foresight and influence, and some of the laws he carried—such as that regulating the loans made by the Roman money-lenders to the provincials—show that he was possessed of a sense of justice. He was praetor in 61, and consul in 58. He was a power in Rome, and politically a power for good, and it was not in Caesar's interest to do anything which might estrange him from himself. The case of the connection of Caesar with Servilia is more easy of investigation, for we know more about her. She was the daughter of Livia, sister of the tribune M. Livius Drusus, who had died as a veritable martyr to the cause of justice and freedom. Servilia was married first to M. Junius Brutus, by whom she became the mother of Caesar's murderer. On the death of her husband in B.C. 77, she was left with a son and two



daughters. She married next D. Junius Silanus, by whom she had two daughters, both named Junia, and perhaps a son.<sup>1</sup>

That a close friendship existed between Julius Caesar and this lady need not be denied. There was much to draw them together. She was undoubtedly considerably the elder of the two, and was a woman of ability and intelligence. She was the niece of Livius Drusus, a man of remarkably enlightened mind and liberal views, with whose efforts to carry a reform Caesar must have been in complete accord. Towards young Brutus, Caesar, for his mother's sake rather than his own, showed a kindly interest. The husband of Servilia was rich, was a gifted orator, and a man open to reason, as was manifested upon the occasion of the debate on the Catiline conspirators, when, although considerably Caesar's senior, he yielded to his arguments after having expressed an opinion different from that of Caesar.

On this unpleasant topic it is pleasant to be able to quote Mr. Froude : 'Caesar was as much admired in the world of fashion as he was detested in the Curia. He had no taste for the brutal entertainments, and the more brutal vices of male patrician society. He preferred the companionship of cultivated women, and the noble lords had the fresh provocation of finding their hated antagonist an object of adoration to their wives and daughters. Here, at any rate, scandal had the field to itself. . . . Charges of this kind have the peculiar advantage that, even when disproved, or shown to be manifestly absurd, they leave a stain behind them. Careless equally of probability and decency, the leaders of the senate sacrificed without scruple the reputation of their own relatives, if only they could make Caesar odious. Two points may be remarked about these legends : first, that on no single occasion does Caesar appear to have been involved in any trouble or quarrel on account of his love affairs ; secondly, that, with the exception of Brutus and of Cleopatra's Caesarion, whose claims to be Caesar's son were denied and disproved ; there is no record of any illegitimate children as the result of these amours—a strange thing if Caesar was as liberal of his favours as popular scandal pretended.<sup>2</sup> It would be idle to affect a belief that Caesar was particularly virtuous. He was a man of the world, living in an age as corrupt as has ever been known. It would be equally idle to assume that all the ink-blots thrown upon him were certainly deserved, because we find them in books which we call classical. Proof deserving to be called proof there is none ; the only real evidence is the town-talk of a society which hated and feared

<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain whether M. Silanus, who was consul in 729, was the son of D. Junius Silanus, or of Marcus Silanus his brother. Two daughters are known, one who married M. Lepidus the triumvir, and another who married C. Cassius ; the latter was called Junia Tertia, so that we may suppose there was again another Junia, concerning whom history is silent, unless her cousin was Junia Prima.

<sup>2</sup> To these may perhaps be added 'Julius Sabinus,' the Lingonian, who pretended a descent from Julius Caesar ; but Tacitus rejects this as absurd. *Hist.* iv. 55.

Caesar, and was glad of every pretext to injure him when alive, or to discredit him after his death. Similar stories have been spread, are spread, and will be spread of every man who raises himself a few inches above the level of his fellows. We know how it is with our contemporaries. A single seed of fact will produce in a season or two a harvest of calumnies, and sensible men pass such things by, and pay no attention to them. With history we are less careful or less charitable. An accusation of immorality is accepted without examination when brought against eminent persons who can no longer defend themselves, and to raise a doubt of its truth passes as a sign of a weak understanding.'

There are other reasons for withholding faith from these stories, and one of the main reasons is this—the perfect justness of Caesar's character. When we think of the patience, the forbearance, the gentleness he showed to others—patience, forbearance, and gentleness that spring in no heart save out of self-knowledge most searching and honest—it seems impossible to believe that Caesar would have divorced Pompeia for infidelity, knowing himself to be false to her. That lofty pride with which he spoke, when he said that Caesar's wife must be above suspicion of stain, showed that he valued purity, not in his wife only, but in himself. And, again, as Mr. Froude points out, a Roman wife had always at hand the means of proclaiming her sense of wrong done her by a husband who was untrue. She could have a divorce with the greatest ease; but not one of Caesar's wives made any attempt to break the tie that bound her to him. No story is told of his having had any mistress accompanying him in his Gallic and Spanish campaigns; it was only in the close and morally malarious atmosphere of Rome that these foul stories sprung up like toadstools. Caesar, by all accounts, was a man of extraordinary self-restraint. He drank and ate with extreme moderation. If he felt anger, it was completely under control. Such a man, holding the mastery over his passions, is master over all, not of five only out of the six. He was simple in speech, simple in his literary style, simple in his diet, and it is incredible that he should have been dissolute and coarse in his relations to the other sex. Livius Drusus, the uncle of Servilia, when a house was being built for him, and the architect had complained of the site as one that was overlooked, had answered, 'Why not? I do not heed that my whole life should be visible to all the world,'—and Caesar may have thought much the same; but if so, he was mistaken. The malice of little minds stops at nothing if only it can find dirt with which to besmirch the honour of the great and noble.

Caesar's praetorship being ended, he was granted Further Spain as his province; but he could not leave Rome till the trial of Clodius was over, and he was moreover detained by his debts. His creditors no doubt were content that he should now enter on the government of a

province, whence he could crop a harvest of gains with which to pay them back their capital advanced, and the extortionate interest charged. But Caesar clearly preferred to have to do with one creditor than a number. Some one asked him the amount he owed. 'I want two hundred and fifty millions of sesterces to be worth nothing,' was his laughing answer. He went to Crassus in his difficulty—the man whose wife he was said to have debauched—and Crassus readily advanced him 830 talents (£200,000). Then, at once, he departed. Tongues were



FIG. 10.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Head of the Statue in the Palace of the Conservatori, Rome.

set a-wagging. Some said he fled from a prosecution, but on what charge none could say. It occurred to no one that he had a duty to perform in his province, and that now he had the means to leave Rome he was anxious to discharge it, or that Roman society must be at the time eminently distasteful to him, with the talk in every saloon and in all the baths and porticoes about Clodius and Pompeia.

In Spain Caesar set to work first of all to reduce to obedience certain refractory tribes, and then to redress a great grievance.

The farmers of the revenue exacted of the provincials their dues with severity. But as the money-lenders with whom they were in league were ready to accommodate the natives with usurious loans on the security of their homesteads and lands, they seized this means of relieving immediate calls, and became hopelessly involved in the toils of these usurers, who came down on them, sold their persons and families as slaves, and confiscated their estates. This produced much misery and disaffection. Gabinius introduced a law to rectify the evil. By his law if more than twelve per cent. were agreed to be paid, it could not be recovered. We do not know the exact date of the passing of this law, but it is probable that it was the result of an exchange of views between Caesar and Gabinius on the subject. They were friends and worked together.

Caesar took the matter of the loans in hand in his province, and effected an adjustment whereby the debts were liquidated by instalments, so as to content all parties.

Whilst he was in Spain reducing the Lusitaniae, north of the Douro, taking Brigantium, and being saluted 'Imperator' by the soldiers, affairs in Rome fell into the worst confusion. Clodius was one of those men who seem born into the world to set their fellows by the ears. Having exhausted his patrimony, he set up to be a mob-leader, and with his good looks, his insolence, unscrupulousness, and fluent clap-trap, became in a short time the darling of the people. He surrounded himself with a body-guard of hired ruffians, and made himself the terror of the aristocracy.

'Nothing,' says Napoleon, 'now arrested the march of events. The party that called itself Conservative hurried them forward more rapidly than any other. It was evident that the State was rolling down to revolution; and a revolution is like a river which overflows and inundates. Caesar aimed at digging a bed for it. Pompeius, seated proudly at the helm, thought he could command the waves that were sweeping him along. Cicero, always irresolute, at one moment allowed himself to drift with the stream, at another thought himself able to stem it with a fragile bark. Cato, immovable as a rock, flattered himself that he alone could oppose the irresistible torrent that was sweeping away the old order of Roman society.'

Caesar's authority as *propraetor* of Spain expired in January 60; he was back in Italy in June; he asked for a triumph and the consulship. But he could not obtain both owing to some technical difficulties, and, constrained to elect between the empty pageant and real power, like a wise man he chose the latter.

The candidature of Caesar was naturally opposed by the aristocratic party, who brought all the power of their influence and of their purses to bear on the contest, but they could not defeat him; all they could do was to saddle him with a colleague of their party, the same Bibulus

A.U.C. 694.

R.C. 60.

Aet. 42.



who had been aedile with Caesar before, and they achieved one triumph, which they knew would cause Caesar annoyance, both as a slight and as hindering him from filling his empty coffers. It was usual to appoint beforehand the province to which the consul was to retire as governor at the expiration of his consulship. They refused Caesar a province, and destined for him instead the surveyorship of the roads and of the woods. Caesar saw that political life in the capital was reduced to empty quarrels, based on no principles, through the rivalries and jealousies of the rich and powerful. He did not seek to make himself a dominant power by inciting the faction leaders to further quarrel, but used his utmost endeavours to reconcile those who were estranged from one another through private pique or political antagonism, so that the dissensions which tore the vitals of the Republic, being appeased, Rome might have the proper energy and strength to hold the provinces in control, and repel the barbarians from her frontiers. He made advances to Cicero, overtures to Bibulus. He did not rest till he had patched up a reconciliation between Pompeius and Crassus, and with them had formed the first Triumvirate, a compromise, postponing the inevitable struggle. Caesar exercised a salutary control over Clodius. He acknowledged at once that Pompeius had been treated without generosity and confidence, and he proposed an agrarian law that might satisfy the demands of Pompeius, for his veterans, without injuring anybody. The main provisions were these:—That the State domain that was unlet and unoccupied should be portioned out, and that the soldiers of Pompeius, and such of the overspill of the Roman populace as could boast of having three sons in a family, should be planted in colonies on this land. Acquired rights were to be respected. If sufficient soil was not thus attainable, then the money in the treasury sent home by Pompeius was to be expended in the purchase of additional land. It was but reasonable, he contended, that the money gained by the veterans should be spent in founding peaceful homes for them in their old age. It was calculated that twenty thousand poor families would thus be given the means of earning an honest livelihood. None were to have more than two acres, for the Capuan soil was so fertile that it yielded four harvests in the year. By this plan Rome would be relieved of a hundred thousand indigent persons, at the same time that great colonies of free men were planted on land hitherto tilled by small proprietors. The measure would undoubtedly diminish the revenue derived from the rent of these lands, but, on the other hand, it would relieve it of a burdensome charge—the free distribution of corn to this great multitude.

A.U.C. 695.  
B.C. 59.  
Act. 43.

Caesar approached Bibulus, protested his good intentions, and offered to subject to him and to the senate all his measures in the public interest; but he was received with coldness and suspicion. The senate objected to his bill without explaining their reasons. Then he appealed

to the people assembled in their comitia. Of the ten tribunes he could count on seven. The other three were in the pay of the senate to oppose their *veto* to any bill to which they objected.

The irritation among the people was great. Caesar in the rostra turned to Bibulus, his colleague, and solemnly adjured him to assist in carrying a measure calculated to give honourable employment and homes to a multitude of poor families, and to recompense the soldiers who had fought in the East. Bibulus was sulky and refused. Then Caesar addressed the people and urged them to use their best endeavours to persuade Bibulus. But this man, who prided himself on his stubbornness, shouted, as sole response, that as long as he remained consul the law should never be carried.

Caesar, always master of himself, then turned to Pompeius, and asked his opinion. 'If the law be opposed with the sword,' said Pompeius, 'to defend it I will take sword and buckler.'

Crassus also gave his opinion in favour of the measure. Then Bibulus cried out that he would oppose the re-assembling of the comitia. He would declare each day of his consulate a holy day on which no assembly could be held. If held in spite of his protestation, he was augur, and he would find some signs in the heavens that would annul any decision arrived at by the comitia of the people. He could hardly have done more to expose his own folly and to raise to white heat the passions of the populace. The assembly was adjourned to the morrow; Bibulus arrived surrounded by senators, and followed by the tribunes in the pay of the senate. The crowd separated, and allowed him to reach the temple of Castor, and held its breath to hear what he had to say. He reiterated his protestations, and declared that three tribunes having pronounced their *veto*, the bill could no longer be proceeded with.

This provoked a great shout of rage, and the rabble were in commotion. It swept up the temple steps, rushed upon the consul, broke the rods of his lictors, and Bibulus, covered with mud, tumbled head over heels from the platform into the surging crowd below. He was on his feet again in a moment, howling out his defiance, and screaming to the people to kill him, that his blood might fall on the head of Caesar.

Cato had done his best to prevent the passage of the bill when presented in the senate, by talking against time, a base and unworthy trick, that so exasperated Caesar that he ordered him to prison, but immediately released him, finding that he had committed an error in policy.

Cato then elbowed his way to the same raised place, where stood the popular consul, and shouted out that Caesar was acting illegally, as the senate had not sanctioned the measure. 'But,' says Cicero, 'as nobody listened to him, he did not address himself further to the assembly, but turned to abuse Caesar in the coarsest terms, till he was ejected.'

The bill was carried by acclamation by the tribute comitia, and then Caesar endeavoured to impose it on the candidates, by requiring them to take oath that they accepted it as having the force of law. And this he succeeded in doing. The whole proceeding, however, was violent, and only to be justified by the dead-lock to which legislation had been brought by the folly of the senate. Caesar saw that if Pompeius were driven to desperation by resistance to his just demands, he might be forced to appeal to his old soldiers, and then he would assume the dictatorship



FIG. 11.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Profile of the Head of the Statue in the Palace of the Conservatori, Rome.

and carry his measures with a high hand. And if such an event were to happen, Pompeius was not a man averse from shedding blood; once more there would be butchery and confiscation.

Caesar went further: he carried a bill for the confirmation of the acts of Pompeius in the provinces, a measure which ought to have been passed before, and one for which Pompeius had pleaded in vain.

After this defeat, sulky and humbled, Bibulus retired to his house, and would not again show his face through the rest of his term of office. 'By which conduct,' says Velleius Paterculus, 'whilst desiring to heighten the odium against his colleague, he was, in reality, only augmenting the power of the latter.'

Skulking at home in this undignified manner, he peered at the skies, and no sooner had Caesar announced a measure he disliked than Bibulus declared that his observation of the heavens presented some obstacle to its passage. When this augural contemplation failed in its effects, he amused his leisure and gratified his spleen by the composition of obscene pasquinades levelled against his fellow-consul, and having these placarded about the town.

Caesar, having carried his law relative to the apportionment of the land, and saddled it with a codicil requiring every senator to swear to observe it, went to the senate to present it there. He found that the members had deserted their benches and hurried home. An old man, named Considius, was there. Caesar, surprised to see the empty benches, asked the old senator the reason. 'They have run from your soldiers!' answered Considius. The nobility had made a display of their courage by effacing themselves. But when they found they could not help it, they came sneaking back and took the required oath, with the resolve to break it when the occasion offered. By such unworthy means as these did the aristocracy, reconstituted by Sulla, oppose a man of genius, determination, and true patriotism.

The consulship of Caesar was marked by the passing of several salutary laws; some of which were directed towards the relief of the provinces. One provided a guarantee to the inhabitants of a province against the violence and rapacity of the proconsuls and propraetors set over them. Another placed the free states under their native codes of law, and suffered them to elect their own magistrates. Caesar carried a law that obliged every governor on going out of office to produce an account of his expenditure and receipts. He gained the goodwill of the knights by passing a measure of relief they had vainly sought of the senate. The taxes of Asia had been leased to some of them at a price so high that, owing to the impoverishment of Asia through continuous wars, they were unable to raise the money, and they asked for a reduction of the terms of their lease. Cato had animated the senate to refuse this reasonable concession; but Caesar, fully aware of its justice, carried the point in the teeth of their opposition.

In return for what he had done for them, P. Vatinius, no doubt with the support of Pompeius and Crassus, obtained for Caesar, at the expiration of his consulship, the government of Cisalpine Gaul (Lombardy, and the regions south of the Po to the Apennines),—in place of the surveyorship of the roads that the senate had slightly designed for him. Bibulus engaged certain of the tribunes to obstruct the passage of this measure



through the comitia, and when this device failed, he had recourse to the superstitious fears of the people, by declaring that the auguries forbade the continuation of the debate. This expedient also failed. The government of Cisalpine Gaul was conferred on Caesar, but the senate, by a treacherous display of liberality, invested him also with Transalpine Gaul, blind to their own interests in this as in everything else they did. Their motive was not far to seek. Rome had but just recovered from a panic. Information had reached the capital that the Germans had broken into Gaul and defeated the Gaulish allies of Rome, that the Helvetii were in motion and were surging west. Fears were entertained of a fresh invasion of the Cimbri and Teutones. The first alarm abated, but the senate knew that there must be a conflict waged before long with the barbarians. They were prepared to send Caesar to fall before them, as Carbo and Junius Silanus had been defeated by the Cimbri, and Cassius Longinus by the Helvetii, and Mallius and Caepio by the Cimbri and Ambrones. What would be the loss of a few legions if they were rid of Caesar? Should danger roll over the Alps into the plains of the Po, they had the invincible Pompeius to fall back upon, and he would crush the invaders. Caesar was raw and inexperienced; he had humbled a petty tribe or two in Spain, but that was no evidence that he possessed military talent. So they sent him, as David sent Uriah, to fall by the swords of the Germans. The wise and excellent laws passed during the consulship of Caesar went by the name of the Julian laws. The historian Dion gives us a characteristic touch that enables us to estimate the quality of Cato's mind, when he tells us how that he, in his praetorship, when called on to put in force the laws Caesar had passed, did this indeed, but would never speak of them by the name of their author.

#### V.—CAESAR IN GAUL.

CAESAR had asked for Cisalpine Gaul, a splendid recruiting-ground; in their jealousy and fear, the senate gave him into the bargain what he had not asked for, Transalpine Gaul as exercising-ground, where he might expend his levies in curbing the barbarians. Who then dreamed that this man of forty-three, without much military experience, nearly all of whose life had been spent in the toss and foam of mean party struggles in the capital, would prove to be the greatest general the world had seen? But it was the remarkable feature in this marvellous man, that in whatever direction he turned he achieved great things; whatsoever he put his hand to, he did better than any other man.

With the proconsulships of Illyricum and Cisalpine Gaul, Caesar had been granted two legions; with Gaul beyond the Alps he was reluctantly accorded a third. One stipulation he insisted on—that his term of government should be extended to five years. The Allobroges were

in revolt, the Germans were pouring over the Rhine, the Helvetii rushing like an Alpine torrent out of the gorges of the Rhone. He must be given time to do more than begin the work of quelling the invaders, he must be assured against the risk of being treated as had been Lucullus and Crassus.

In the meantime, some matrimonial alliances had been effected that roused the angry comment of Cato. Pompeius, as already mentioned, had taken to wife Julia, Caesar's only child, and Caesar married

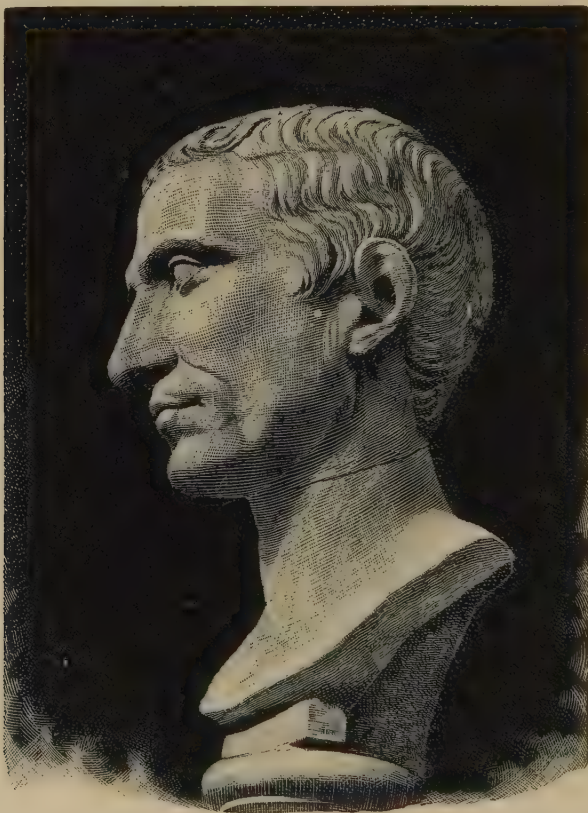


FIG. 12.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 107.

Calpurnia, the daughter of L. Calpurnius Piso, who was consul for the ensuing year; and who would, therefore, look after the interests of his son-in-law during his absence. The other consul was Gabinius, also in his interest—and a friend.

The turbulent Clodius now resolved on becoming a tribune of the people, but to obtain this office he must descend from his patrician

estate to a plebeian one; and this was effected in spite of the resistance of Cicero. In December Clodius entered upon his tribuneship.

Caesar did not set out for his province before the end of March in the next year. During these three months he was actively employed in guarding against attack from his enemies in rear, and against the undoing of those measures for the public good that he had carried whilst consul. He saw that Cicero was menaced by the hatred of Clodius, and he did what he could to save him. He offered him a place on the commission to determine the partition of the public property in Campania among the soldiers of Pompeius; this would have removed him from Rome, and Clodius might not have cared to attack him when absent. Cicero refused the offer. Then Caesar urged him to come with him into Gaul, and offered him a lieutenantancy under him. Again Cicero refused. He could not be brought to believe that he was in real danger. He trusted to the gratitude of the Roman people for having saved them from Catilina, and he confided in the friendship of Pompeius. Then, when every effort failed, Caesar left him to his fate. Clodius soon after brought in a bill levelled against Cicero for his conduct in strangling the conspirators without a trial; and Pompeius did not lift a finger to save him. The Roman populace had begun to disbelieve in the magnitude of the deliverance they owed to Cicero, and did not stir,—Cicero had to fly into voluntary banishment in the East.

A. U. C. 696.  
B. C. 58.  
Aet. 44.

Cato was sent to Cyprus to annex the island to the Roman Empire; and for a while Clodius and his gang were masters of Rome. Caesar was in Gaul, and neither Pompeius nor Crassus showed a disposition to interfere.

And now a new chapter in the life of Caesar opens. Whilst the factions were squabbling in Rome, building up to-day what was to be pulled down to-morrow, Caesar, perhaps alone, saw how serious was the danger that menaced Rome from the North, alone recognised that a crisis in her destiny was reached, similar to that from which Marius had rescued her, thus giving her another spell of life and domination. Every one else was seeking now to hurt his fellow at home, none thought, save with a sudden start in fevered dream, that the barbarians were at the door gathered in dense masses, pressed on by advancing hordes of barbarians still more barbarous, and were about to burst in to trample civilisation under foot.

‘It is more than a blunder,’ says Mommsen, ‘it is a sin against the holy Spirit in history to look on Gaul as the exercising-ground only on which Caesar practised with his legions for the civil war that was in prospect. If the subjection of the West was to Caesar a means to an end, so far that it helped to found his future might, yet it is precisely the feature of statesmanlike genius to make ends of the means employed. Caesar required military power for his party purposes, but

Caesar did not subjugate Gaul as a party man. It was for Rome a political necessity to meet, and plant a dam against, the perpetually threatening invasion of the Germans, so as to assure peace to the Roman world. But even this important object was not the highest, nor the last, at which Caesar aimed in his conquests. When the old home on the Seven Hills was too cramped for the Roman population, the policy of conquest in Italy, engaged in by the senate, saved it from ruin. Now the Italian home was too narrow, and again the State was sick of the same malady, with all the social complications in their acutest form. That was a flash of genius, a hope full of grandeur, that carried Caesar beyond the Alps—the thought of winning for his fellow-citizens a boundless new home, and a hope thereby of regenerating the State by planting it on a new and broader basis.'

The military history of Caesar must here be passed over almost without a word. We cannot follow him through the oak-forests of Gaul, nor across the straits to Britain. We cannot watch him bridge the Rhine, nor hold the lines of Alesia. We must keep our eyes fixed on Rome, for we shall never understand the final action of Caesar, his crossing of the Rubicon and elevation to the dictatorship, unless we properly estimate the paralysis of Rome itself, the heart of the world, and see how that the force of events impelled Caesar irresistibly into his position.

Suffice it then, very briefly, to say that in the year 58, by the time Caesar had disciplined his levies, he was called into action; for tidings reached him that the Helvetii, thrust from their ancient seats by the advancing tide of Germans, had broken into Gaul.

The traveller who descends the Rhone valley knows how that between Brie and Sierre he passes at Pfyn (ad fines) from the German into the French language. To that point the Teutonic wave had rolled over the passes at the head of the Rhone, and before it the Helvetii, a Celtic race, swarmed down, treading on one another's heels, and found the basin of Lake Lemman too densely peopled to hold them all. Therefore they rushed out through the gaps of the Jura. But not only so. All Switzerland north of the Bernese Oberland was occupied by the same Celtic people, and they as well were displaced by the Germans who have occupied their lands to the present day as far as the Saane, where, as at Swiss Freiburg, the demarcation of tongues is again noticeable. The Helvetii therefore, dispossessed, sought new fields beyond the Jura. Caesar not only defeated and drove back the Helvetii, but he also attacked the Germans and repressed their ardour of invasion.

In April of the following year he met Pompeius and Crassus at Lucca, and formed with them a league for their mutual protection amidst the thousand petty jealousies and animosities that actuated the senatorial party against them, and sought the humiliation and destruction of one by the aid of the other. It is

A. U. C. 698.

B. C. 56.

Act. 46.



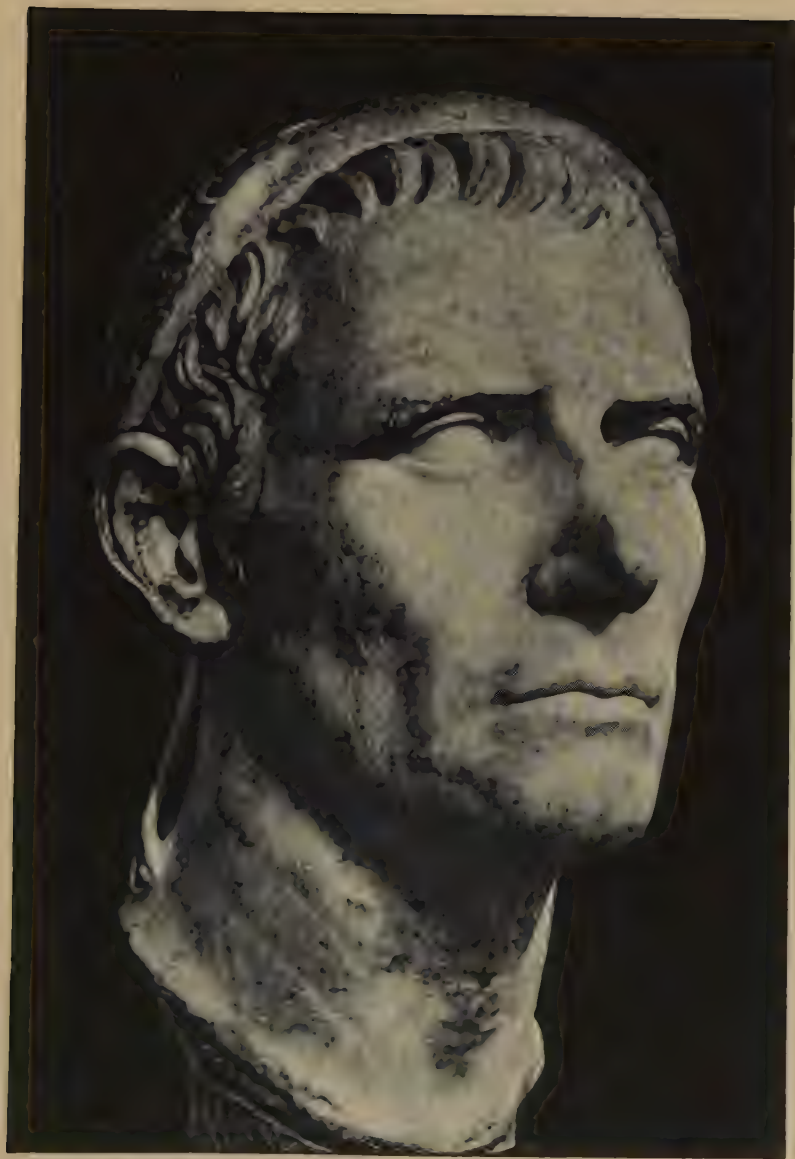


FIG. 13.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the Louvre.

supposed that it was then decided that Pompeius and Crassus should be together consuls for the year 55, and that ended, that Pompeius should hold Spain as his proconsulate, and Crassus Syria, each for the term of five years, and that the government of the two Gauls and Illyricum should remain in Caesar's hands for a further term of five years, that is, till March in 49, and that, in view of the desperate struggle of the Gauls and Germans against the arms of Rome, in this quarter, those legions which Caesar had raised himself, unauthorised by the senate, should be maintained at the public cost. This agreement having been reached, Caesar hurried back into Gaul, where the remainder of the year was consumed in campaigns.

In the meantime a strange condition of affairs existed in Rome, that lasted without intermission for four years. The city was torn by factions; the heads of these factions surrounded themselves with bands of armed men. Every election, and elections were annual, led to riot and bloodshed. Consuls could not be elected. Tribunes, bought by the senate, put their *veto* on whatever was proposed by the popular party, and whatsoever was brought forward by the senate was vetoed by the tribunes of the *populares*. Government was at an end. Violence reigned supreme. Pompeius had not gone near his province, but sat at ease looking on, and hoping that he would be nominated dictator, though shrinking from proposing the nomination himself.

The nobility, becoming alarmed and jealous of the growing fame of Caesar, did their utmost to rouse the envy of Pompeius. About B.C. 54, Julia, Caesar's daughter, and the wife of Pompeius, died, and thus the tie of family affection which had bound the two men together was broken. The senatorial party at once began to court the favour of Pompeius and attach him to their side by assiduous flattery. Crassus was dead; he had fallen in war against the Parthians, and with him a Roman army had been annihilated. Yet, so engrossed were the Roman people over their domestic squabbles that this grave disaster hardly attracted their attention. The senate drew a long breath, and rejoiced to be free from one of the triumvirate. They hoped, by pitting Pompeius against Caesar, to weaken both, and possibly in the end obtain the destruction of both. The former was ever inclined to begrudge the fame of any man, which might eclipse his own transcendent glory, and he had for some time been nursing envy in his heart at the successes of his father-in-law, a man his junior by a few years, successes before which his former achievements in the east might seem to pale.

When the senate offered him the sole consulship—an illegal act, but, as Scipio said, anything was better than anarchy,—he gladly accepted it, and set himself to work to reduce to order the confusion that reigned in the capital.

## VI.—THE ATTEMPT TO DESTROY CAESAR.

As a pledge of his conversion to the oligarchical side, Pompeius married the daughter of Metellus Scipio. And now that the nobility thought they had secured Pompeius the Great, the mighty man of war, they held up their heads and hastened to challenge Caesar. Inconceivably base was their conduct when they sent offers to the German chieftain, Ariovistus, to promise that if he could by assassination obtain the death of Caesar, they would regard him as the friend of Rome for ever. The brave German showed the letters to his foe, and Caesar was warned that the oligarchical party in Rome would stop at nothing in their resolve to undo and destroy him. Pompeius had been made proconsul of Spain, when Caesar had obtained the two Gauls, but, unlike Caesar, he had not gone near his province. He now asked for and obtained a prolongation of his government of the province for another five years. The ten years of Caesar's proconsulship would come to an end in B.C. 49. Then he would sink into the position of a private citizen, to be attacked and harried with prosecutions before a court made up of his deadly opponents, who, if they did not remove him by assassination, would certainly confiscate his estates and banish him. If, however, he could obtain the consulship on his return to Rome, he would be safe for one year at least, during which he could take measures to secure his future. But the senatorial party was resolved to ruin Caesar, and, to do them justice, they played their game with all their cards exposed. For the year B.C. 51, they brought forward as candidates for the consulship Cato and M. Claudius Marcellus, two of Caesar's most determined adversaries. But the candidature of Cato was abandoned, and in his room Ser. Sulpicius Rufus was chosen, who was thought to favour Caesar.

No sooner was Marcellus invested with the consulship than he proposed a measure for depriving Caesar of his proconsulship, and appointing a successor to carry on the Gallic war. But this was such a dash of the gauntlet in the face of Caesar, that the timid shrank from supporting it, and adjourned the vote on it till the beginning of June. When the day approached, Marcellus proceeded to a wanton act of insolence, calculated, he trusted, to rouse the lukewarm to enthusiasm. In Cisalpine Gaul, Caesar had enfranchised Comum, the modern Como. A citizen of that town, a senator, was in Rome. Marcellus had him publicly flogged, and then bade him go, show to Caesar his bleeding back, and let all the world know what the senate thought of Caesar's plaided and breeched citizens. The folly of this act was on a level with its barbarity. In two years Caesar would be back in Rome. He had an army devoted to him, and the insult offered was not to the general only, but to every soldier raised to fill his legions

A.U.C. 703.  
B.C. 51.  
Aet. 51.

in the district north of the Po. It knit the hearts of the provincials as that of one man to Caesar, and roused them to fury against Marcellus and his backing of noble senators.

Then the consular elections for 50 were held, and C. Claudius Marcellus, cousin of this fellow with the cat-o'-nine-tails, and L. Aemilius Paullus were chosen, both hostile to Caesar. Then the motion of the elder Marcellus came on. Again timidity palsied the action of the senate. They desired to deprive Caesar, but considered it would be safer first to reduce his power. So, instead of at once depriving him of the command, they required him to surrender two of his legions, under pretext that the Parthians were troublesome on the eastern frontier. The demand was made at a moment critical to Caesar in Gaul, as the senate had been advised; he had met with reverses. Nevertheless, he at once complied. The two legions were returned, and were *not* sent to the East; they were detained by Pompeius in Italy, to serve, if need be, against Caesar.

The term of Caesar's tenure of the proconsulship would conclude with the last day of December, B.C. 49. If he were elected by the people consul for 48, he would enter on the consulship on January 1. The senate resolved to insist on his resignation of the command of the army and of his government on March 1, B.C. 49, so as to leave ten months free during which he might be prosecuted, condemned, and sent into exile. That, as far as we can gather, was their plan. But in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird. Julius Caesar was kept well informed by his friends as to what were the intentions of his enemies. Pompeius had deserted him, and passed over to become the tool of the opposite faction, and his destruction was resolved on.

When the year B.C. 50 opened, the result of the anarchy at the seat of government had made itself manifest on the frontiers. The Parthians menaced the eastern provinces, and Cicero, now governor of Cilicia, was short of troops; he asked for them in vain. They were detained in Italy. Bibulus was proconsul of Syria, unable to venture beyond his camp without putting the Euphrates between himself and the enemy. Only on the northern frontiers was there security, a security established by the strong arm of Caesar.

Again, in March, the old proposal, twice made by Marcellus, for the dismissal of Caesar, was submitted to the senate, and Pompeius gave it his support. Then Curio, the tribune bought by Caesar, rose, to propose an amendment, to the effect that *both* Pompeius and Caesar should be required simultaneously to resign their commands. 'It is but reasonable,' said he, 'that this should be so. Whilst Pompeius is here, at the head of a military force, the will of the senate and people of Rome is not free; both the debates of the senate and the votes of the people are overawed.'

This unexpected demand roused Pompeius to fury. He denounced

A.U.C. 704.  
B.C. 50.  
Aet. 52.



Curio as a firebrand who sought the destruction of Rome,—a strange accusation to come from such lips, and provoked a crushing retort. But the proposal of Curio was a just one and reasonable, and as such it commended itself to the people, who greeted him with cheers, and strewed flowers in his path. The senate was confounded, and broke up, unable to come to any decision. It was well understood that Curio had made, on the part of Caesar, an offer to submit himself to the will of the senate, if Pompeius would disband and resign simultaneously. However much the senate would like to accept the offer, it was very confident that Pompeius would not consent to efface himself.

‘Cnaeus Pompeius,’ says Mommsen, ‘was not a bad and incapable man, but he was radically a commonplace man, formed by nature to make a good corporal, but forced by circumstances to be a general and a statesman. He was a sensible, brave, and experienced soldier, without a spark of higher faculties. His education was average. His honesty was that of the rich man who manages very well on the income he has inherited and what he has earned. He did not despise making money in the usual senatorial fashion, but he was too cold and too comfortably off to risk his credit by entering into any particularly nefarious transaction. Considering the boundless dissoluteness of the age, he may be counted as a virtuous man, that is to say, relatively so. His “honourable face” was proverbial; even after his death he was reckoned as a worthy and moral man; and in fact he was a good neighbour, who did not seek to buy up all little landholders round him, as did his fellows; also, he showed considerable affection towards wife and children. But when it suited his purpose he was ready to shake off his wife. He was not cruel, but, what was worse, cold, and passionless in good as in bad. In the field he looked his enemy in the face; in the forum he blushed like a girl. When he spoke in public it was with awkwardness. He was stiff, angular, and without ease in society. With all his show of independence, he was a mere tool in the hands of those who understood how to manage him, especially his freedmen and clients, whom he did not suspect of the wish to rule him. For nothing was he less fitted than to be a statesman. Uncertain in aim, inexperienced in the choice of means, short-sighted in little as in great matters, undecided, he thought to conceal his indecision under dignified silence, and when he supposed he was deceiving others, he befooled himself most of all. Almost without his seeking it, an important party ranged itself about him, a party at the head of which he might have achieved great things; but Pompeius was in every capacity incapable of leading a party, or of holding one together. Weak-pated as he was, thrust to a height of fame which he never deserved to reach, he was taken with giddiness. As if to provoke contempt, he sought a parallel to his dry prosaic nature in the most poetic of all the heroic forms of old. He compared himself with Alexander the Great, and



FIG. 14.—CN. POMPEIUS MAGNUS. Bust at Naples,  
found at Pompeii.

regarded himself as one who towered far above the five hundred Roman Councillors. In fact, no man was better calculated to form one of an aristocratic ruling body than himself. His dignified exterior, his stately punctiliousness, his personal courage, his respectable private life, his lack of all initiative, made him just the man who, had he been born two hundred years earlier, might have taken an honourable place beside Quintus Maximus and Publius Decius. There was, however, in his own time, a fit place that he might have occupied, clearly defined and honourable, but he was never content to take what offered, and thus he was ever placed in the situation of aiming at a position apart from the senate, yet, when such a position was accessible, he could not make up his mind to take it. He was angry and embittered if persons and laws did not give way before him, and yet, with affected modesty, he pretended to be on a level with the rest, and shuddered at the thought of attempting anything illegal.<sup>1</sup>

And now, when the senate was defying Caesar, and threatening him because it trusted to its great Pompeius, he quietly retired from Rome, pretended he was afraid of his life, and sought refuge in Campania.

Caesar was a man of other clay. He knew his own mind. He asked for the consulship. The senatorial party was aware that he was sure of it. Hitherto the elections had been managed by bribery the most shameless, by an organised body of electioneering agents, and if the nobles liked to pay enough, they could secure a return of their men. But Caesar had taught the people of Rome, and all invested with the franchise, that something better could be done with a vote than to sell it to the highest bidder. He had shown them that the future of the commonwealth was at stake, and that, unless Rome was to cease to be the mistress of the world, all men good and true must stand shoulder to shoulder, and fight for righteousness and justice, not for themselves only, but for all the nations under them. Before the domination of this great thought the oligarchy was powerless. Its control of the elections was taken from it. The enfranchised Italians would swarm into Rome from every country town, to vote for Caesar, and the very rabble of the capital, not for the first time, would rise above the miserable inducements of corruption. The returning soldiers would vote to a man for their general.

'The senate knew him. They knew what he had done. They knew what he would do now, and for this reason they feared and hated him. Caesar was a reformer. He had long seen that the Roman Constitution was too narrow for the functions which had fallen to it,

<sup>1</sup> Bernoulli is disposed to regard a fine bust of the period of the fall of the Republic, in the Chiaramonti Gallery (No. 561) as Pompeius. This is a psychological impossibility. The man whose portrait this is, was endowed with dogged determination, and, though not a man of great ability, was a man of clear views and great resolution in carrying them out. If the face tells any story, it tells this.

and that it was degenerating into an instrument of tyranny and injustice. The courts of law were corrupt; the elections were corrupt; the administration of the provinces was a scandal and a curse. The soil of Italy had become a monopoly of capitalists, and the inhabitants of it a population of slaves. He had exerted himself to stay the mischief at its fountain, to punish bribery, to punish the rapacity of proconsuls and prætors, to purify the courts, to maintain respect for the law. He had endeavoured to extend the franchise, to raise the position of the liberated slaves, to replace upon the land a free race of Roman citizens. In the families of the veteran legionaries, spread in farms over Italy and the provinces, the national spirit might recover; and, with a due share of political power conceded to them, an enlarged and purified constituency might control the votes of the venal populace of the city. These were Caesar's designs, so far as could be gathered from his earlier actions.<sup>1</sup>

The year was drawing to an end, and the proposal of M. Marcellus was still unvoted on, postponed and postponed, till it was almost too late. But the consul C. Marcellus again brought it forward. He asked, in full senate, Was a successor to be given to Caesar? Thereupon a majority voted that there was.

Then he asked, Was Pompeius to be called on to resign, according to the proposal of Curio? The answer was a negative. Then up rose young Curio, and put his motion to the vote—that both generals, both Caesar and Pompeius, should be required to resign simultaneously. To the astonishment of Marcellus three hundred and forty voted for Curio's amendment, against twenty-two. The senate had plucked up courage to express its real wishes. Thereat Marcellus, exasperated, left the curia, exclaiming, 'You are determined to give yourselves a master—you shall have one.'

The party bent on drawing the sword against Caesar, to which belonged the two Marcelli, Lentulus the consul, and Cato—a party that had succeeded at last in convincing the self-esteem of Pompeius that it was necessary to deal with the great nephew of Marius as Marius had been dealt with, and that Pompeius was the second Sulla, to accomplish this—were in a painful predicament. The pliable, feeble senate had broken in their hands. The consul C. Marcellus endeavoured to recover ground by announcing in the senate, what was false, that Caesar had brought four legions out of Gaul, and was at their head marching upon Rome. He therefore demanded that Pompeius should be empowered by the senate to advance, at the head of what troops could be collected, against him; but when Curio denied the truth of the statement, the senate rejected the proposal of Marcellus. 'Well then,' said the consul, 'since I can do nothing here with the consent of all, I alone will take charge of the public welfare on my own responsibility.'

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *Caesar*, p. 379.



He hurried off, called to him the two consuls-elect for the ensuing year, and these three individuals unauthorised by the senate—contrary indeed to the senatorial vote—visited Pompeius in his quarters outside Rome, and extending to him a sword, bade him ‘take command of the troops then at Capua, raise others, and adopt such measures as were necessary for the safety of the republic.’

The answer of Pompeius was characteristic of the man: ‘I will do so, if there be nothing better to be done.’

The proceeding was outrageous and utterly illegal. But it sufficed Pompeius, who was now impatient to assert himself. Had he accepted the decision of the senate, and resigned his command, Caesar was ready to do so likewise. Civil war would have been averted, at all events for the time. But this was what Pompeius would not hear of.

This happened towards the end of December. Caesar had come to winter in Cisalpine Gaul, and was at Ravenna. Instead of having with him four legions, as Marcellus asserted, he had but one, comprising 5000 men and 300 cavalry. Nearly his whole army, consisting of eight legions, he had placed in winter quarters in Belgium and Gaul. After the meeting of the senate, and the action of the consul Marcellus with the two consuls-elect, Curio left Rome and hastened to Ravenna for instructions.

His tribuneship expired on the last day of December. He urged Caesar to summon the other legions to cross the Alps, and to march upon Rome. But Caesar would not listen to these proposals. He said that he was ready to enter into such a compromise as would satisfy the moderate men, such as Cicero. He was ready to abandon his command in Transalpine Gaul and the eight legions, if he might remain in command of two in Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum till his consulship began. He even modified this offer, and asked merely to be given one legion and Illyricum. All he desired was not to be exposed defenceless to his enemies for a few months. ‘He made the greatest efforts to maintain peace,’ says Velleius Paterculus, ‘but the friends of Pompeius rejected all conciliatory proposals.’

A.U.C. 705.  
B.C. 49.  
Act. 53.

‘The appearance of justice,’ says Plutarch, ‘was on the side of Caesar.’ He couched his proposal in a letter which he delivered to Curio, who returned with it to Rome, and arrived there on the first of January, the day on which the new consuls entered on their office. Knowing their bitter antagonism, and fearing lest they should suppress the letter, Curio did not deliver it to them, but asked leave to read it to the senate. This the consuls opposed, but two of the tribunes insisted with so much energy, that they were constrained to withdraw their opposition.

Caesar in his letter repeated his offer to disband and resign his proconsular functions if Pompeius would do the same. It could not be required of him, he said, to deliver himself up defenceless into the hands of his mortal enemies, armed to the teeth. If the senate demanded

submission—and it had passed an order requiring both Pompeius and himself to resign—then let submission be required of the former as well. The letter concluded with a menace, that showed that the forbearance of Caesar was wellnigh exhausted. If, said he, justice were not done him, he would know how, by revenging himself, to revenge his country also. When this was read, the loudest exclamations of wrath broke out among the senators. ‘It is war he declares!’ they shouted, and separated in great excitement, without deliberating on the offer of Caesar.

Next day the senate reassembled. The new consul, Lentulus, in a violent oration, engaged the senate to rally to the side of daring, to clothe itself with courage, and adopt an attitude of decision. ‘If you mean to spare Caesar and to conciliate his good graces, then farewell to all your authority. I shall not trouble the senate with my presence any further, but follow my own devices.’ Scipio assured the timid that his son-in-law Pompeius would not fail the Republic, if the senate stood firm. But if they showed weakness, then he would have nothing more to say to it. M. Marcellus advised that the senate should assemble troops before it came to any decision. M. Calidius inquired why Pompeius hung about Rome, and moved that he should be required to retire to his province, Spain, which he had not as yet visited. Caesar, he said, had been badly used. Two legions had been taken from him on a false pretext, and these were now marshalled against him.

M. Rufus gave his opinion in almost the same terms. Lentulus at once burst into furious reproaches, and refused to put the motion of Calidius to the vote. At last, carried away by rash confidence in Pompeius, who was outside the gates at the head of the troops he had collected, and convinced that he would never yield to the proposal of Caesar, the senate reluctantly, on the motion of Scipio, decreed that ‘if Caesar did not disband his army by a day prescribed, he should be declared an enemy of the Republic.’ Marcus Antonius and Q. Cassius, two tribunes of the people, pronounced their *veto*, thus quashing the proceedings.

Then Pompeius summoned the senators to his gardens, and by threats and promises confirmed them in the attitude they had assumed.

The city was thrown into the wildest agitation. The censor Piso and the quaestor Roscius offered to go to Caesar, and begged that no precipitate measures against him might be taken for six days. Their request was refused. Curio demanded that the assembly of the people should be convoked, and the question submitted to them. This also was refused. The consuls proposed to disregard the *veto* of the tribunes. The tribunes declared that the power to *veto* a bill had not been withdrawn, and that they exercised their legitimate right in pronouncing it. The consul Lentulus, boiling with fury, interrupted Marcus Antonius as he spoke, and threatened him unless he at once left the curia. Antonius

called on the gods to witness that the sacred privileges of the tribune's power were violated in his person. 'We are insulted,' he exclaimed; 'we are treated as murderers. You want proscriptions, massacres, and fire.' Then he left the senate along with his fellow-tribune, just in time to escape the soldiers of Pompeius, who were folding round the senate-house. The tribunes, together with Curio and another, escaped during the night of the 6th January in the disguise of slaves, and fled to Caesar's quarters.

The senate continued to deliberate, not now in the curia, but in the gardens of Pompeius. They were alarmed at the consequences of their action, into which they had been driven by a few violent men. Pompeius reassured them. He had four legions in Italy, he said, and six in Spain. He had but to stamp his foot, and hosts would spring up everywhere.

The aristocracy had vast confidence in their great man, Pompeius; they had also a well-founded confidence in their money-bags, and messengers were sent with lavish promises to corrupt the fidelity of Caesar's soldiers. Labienus, one of Caesar's most trusted officers, was thus bought. Caesar was informed that Labienus had been tampered with, but with that generosity which was natural to him, he refused to believe it, and appointed him to be his lieutenant-governor. But the traitor stole away and went to Pompeius, leaving his effects behind him. Caesar sent them after him.

#### VII.—CIVIL WAR.

THERE was but a single legion with Caesar at the time when the senate declared war against him, in defiance of law, in defiance of their own better judgment. He now addressed his veterans and told them what was his situation. They placed themselves unreservedly in his hands. Then he advanced to Ariminum. There he was met by a kinsman, Lucius Caesar, with a message from Pompeius—not sincere on the face of it; designed merely to gain time whilst the senate discussed, and he called together troops. Caesar replied: Let Pompeius retire to his province, and carry his troops with him. It was a reasonable offer. He did not ask that his adversary should resign the proconsulship, only that he should leave Italy with his soldiers. Caesar solemnly protested that he did not seek war, but he must protect himself against the destruction with which he was menaced. Let Pompeius meet him at any place and time that suited him, and he was confident that they would speedily come to an understanding. Lucius Caesar returned to Rome with the letter, and the announcement that Caesar had already crossed the Rubicon, and was no longer in his province. No more was Pompeius; he had not even looked at his. Caesar was at the head of a legion; Pompeius also was at the head of armed

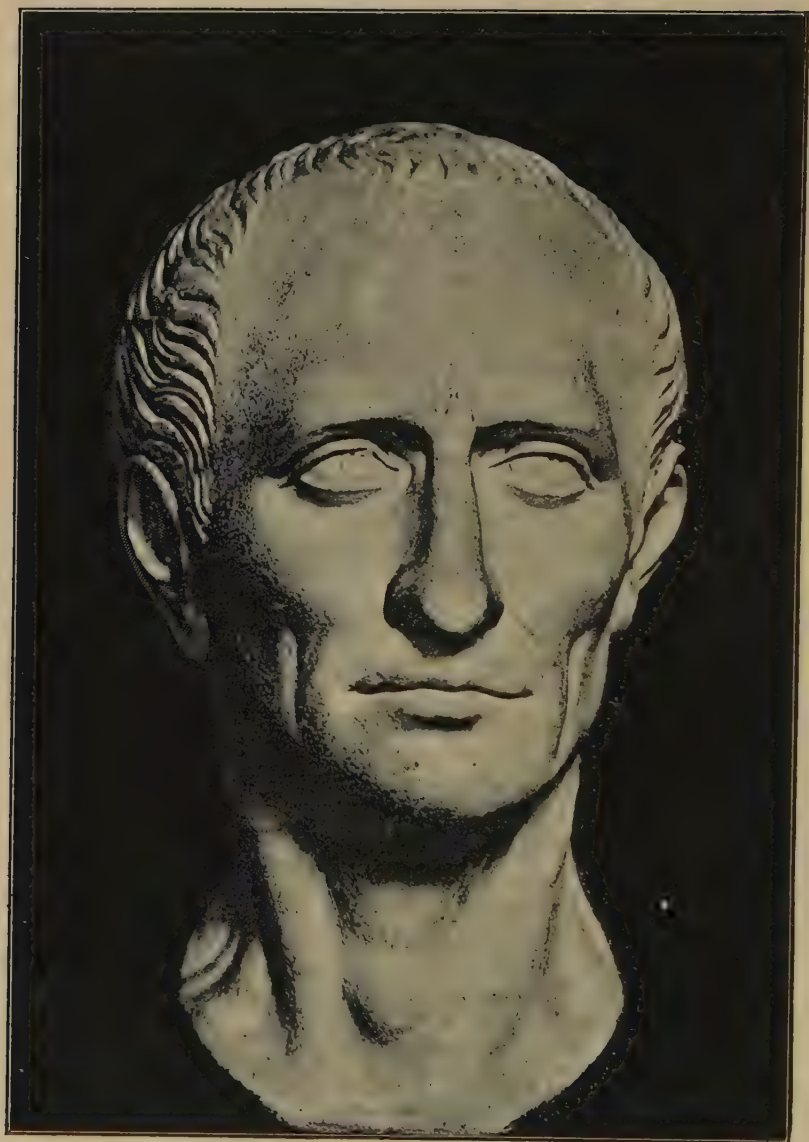


FIG. 15.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the British Museum.



forces. But now a panic fell on the braggarts who had boasted that only a bold face was needed to overawe Caesar; and away they scuttled, some in litters, some afoot, some on horseback, leaving their pictures and statues, their wives and children, and dancers and slaves, behind, and never halted till they reached Capua, whither Pompeius had gone to raise troops. There Caesar's letter was delivered to him on January 25th. The consuls were with him, and so were a number of the senators; they piped now in a minor key. Pompeius had stamped, but no armed men sprang up. Labienus had deserted Caesar, but his soldiers stood firm.

An answer was drawn up and despatched to Caesar. No interview was appointed, vague promises of disbanding were made, and at the same time, fresh levies were ordered. Pompeius, the senate, Cicero, all had lost their heads, and talked of flying from Italy. 'The consuls are helpless,' wrote Cicero to his friend Atticus, 'there has been no levy. With Caesar pressing forward, and our general doing nothing, the men will not come to be enrolled. Pompeius is prostrate, without courage, without purpose, without force, without energy.'

In the meantime L. Domitius Ahenobarbus (the Brazenbeard) had collected a force and occupied Corfinium, a strongly fortified position in the Apennines, with the intention of arresting Caesar's progress. Time had been allowed to slip. Pompeius had loitered with his two legions, when Caesar had but one, and now a second had come to Caesar from the other side of the Alps. Domitius wrote to Pompeius that he would hold the aggressor in check till he could hurry up with succour. But Pompeius left him to his fate—not a cruel one, for his troops deserted, and Domitius and all his noble volunteers fell into the hands of Caesar without striking a blow. Caesar allowed them all to depart, and to carry with them the money which they had brought into Corfinium. He did not even exact from them a promise to take no further part in the war.

Caesar at once hastened through Apulia in pursuit of Pompeius, and reached Brundisium as the invincible conqueror of the East cut his cable, and started for the Greek coast in a fleet with all his soldiers and the host of noble refugees.

Then Caesar turned; he was master of Italy, as well as of Gaul. He entered Rome, where he was received by the tribune Marcus Antonius.

But in Rome he did not remain. With a promptitude that marked all his actions and assured their success, he at once departed for Spain, which had been subject to Pompey's rule for the last five years, and where there was a veteran army, which it was advisable to disperse. The veterans were under two Pompeian leaders, Afranius and Petreius. But however devoted these commanders might be to their proconsular chief, the soldiers were ready to desert to Caesar, and Afranius and Petreius surrendered, unable to control their troops.

Before autumn closed, all Spain was at the feet of Caesar, and, secured from danger in the West, he at once returned to Rome.

We have, in Cicero's letters to Atticus, an interesting picture of the vacillation of the mind of the writer, but more than that, a full and clear intimation of the designs of the party against which Caesar in self-defence had drawn the sword. Cicero had a great regard for Pompeius, he loved him personally, and yet was unable to disguise from himself that the triumph of Pompeius would be fatal to the commonwealth. He distinctly says that the object of Pompeius now was to be a second Sulla. He had found out his former error in disbanding his forces and trusting to his name alone for commanding the factions in Rome, and he would not repeat his mistake. The words, Cicero tells us, were constantly on his lips, 'What Sulla did, why cannot I?' He says, moreover, that the plan of Pompeius was to seize the naval stations, where ships were collected, and use them to intercept the corn fleets that supplied Italy with provisions. He hoped by this means to starve Rome and Italy into revolt against Caesar. Besides this, he intended, when he landed there on his triumphant return, to lay the country waste with fire and sword, and to confiscate the property, not only of the adherents of Caesar, but also, like Sulla, of all who had remained neutral. The nobles in the camp had already drawn up their lists of all who were to be put to death, and all whose estates were to be confiscated, and in that list was the name of Atticus, the friend of Cicero, who kept aloof from all political strife. At the very moment of leaving Rome, these lordly ruffians had, at the instigation of Domitius Ahenobarbus, determined to drive the waverers and indifferent into the Pompeian camp by terror, by announcing that every citizen who remained behind at Rome should be deemed a Caesarian. The desertion of the great capital was thought to signify that Pompeius and his parcel of nobles did it purposely so as to involve the city in Caesar's cause, and furnish them with an excuse for a bloody sack and a general pillage.

Pompeius was now the head of a party that hated him, and which he viewed with suspicion, driven to this position by mere envy of the superior abilities and the glorious achievements of Caesar, which, he conceived, threw his own into the shade. He had neither the political sagacity to see what the Commonwealth needed to save it from dissolution, nor had he the patriotism to care to save it. He was at the head of an army composed of men who, he knew, should they succeed in crushing Caesar, would seek his own life with the dagger or with poison. He had in his camp the consuls; these were a rival authority, and his title of Imperator would not weigh against their superior claims on the soldiers' allegiance.

Caesar had made himself master of Italy in sixty days. Then he had left Italy for Spain, having first confided the government of Rome to M. Aemilius Lepidus, an hereditary opponent of the oligarchy, and

appointed Marcus Antonius to watch over his interests in Italy. In Rome, the members of the nobility who remained were either devoted to Caesar's cause, or were rendered neutral by the threat of massacre on the return of Pompeius. The middle class of citizens was generally favourable to him, and it was only the licentious and versatile rabble that could cause any anxiety to the praefect of Italy. During the absence of Caesar in Spain, at the recommendation of Lepidus, Caesar was declared dictator. The consuls had fled from Italy; no elections for the ensuing year could be made in Rome, and none legally out of Rome. It was necessary that some officer should be appointed who could summon the consular assemblies, and this was the only feasible course consistent with precedent. Caesar was resolved to hold the consulship the next year, and this was the sole expedient by which the elections could be rendered legal in the absence of the consuls.

Caesar returned to Rome for the elections, and was chosen consul, along with P. Servilius Isauricus, son of an honourable father, who had done good service to his country.

Caesar spent but eleven days in Rome, but in that brief time passed measures of utility. He found that, owing to the political confusion of the times, there was prevalent a general difficulty about the recovery of debts. The impression had prevailed that a general scramble for property was coming. Creditors were harsh in exacting their dues, and loans were raised at exorbitant interest. Every one who could turn his effects into money was doing so that he might escape from an anticipated proscription, and hide his property. Caesar passed financial measures to revive confidence, as far as might be, and restore the abundance of the circulating medium. Then he granted an amnesty to all the victims of civil war. At the same time Caesar accomplished an act, the policy and justice of which he had long recognised and contended for, but hitherto in vain. He conferred the Roman franchise upon the Gauls north of the Po. The concession had been opposed with dogged hostility by the Optimates, who resented all broadening of the base of government to any beyond the rabble whom they could buy or terrorise. The time had now arrived when this obstruction did not stand in the way, and henceforward the freedom of the city was bounded only by the Alps.

Caesar resigned the dictatorship to assume in the new year his consulship in conjunction with Servilius, and then at once hastened to Brundisium, whither he had summoned his veterans to attend him; and now every eye was turned on the two hosts ranged one against the other, each under the command of a general esteemed the greatest of his time.

'The judgment and ability which Caesar manifested throughout his proceedings must raise his estimation as a statesman to the highest pitch. He who had crossed the Rubicon at the beginning of the year,

in defiance of law and authority, had now completely turned against his opponents the current of public feeling. The moral victory he had gained over them was more complete than the triumph of his arms. He was now consul of the republic, legitimately elected and duly invested with full powers. Throughout the empire there were vast numbers of citizens who would bow implicitly to the wielder of this formal authority. There were many cities which would shut their gates against any party which opposed him, without asking a question as to the substantial justice of its cause. On the other hand, the Pompeians acknowledged by their own conduct that they had ceased to retain the government of Rome. In Epirus, though there were two hundred senators in their camp, they dared not enact a law or hold an election, or confer the imperium. The representative of the people had become the guardian of precedent and order; while the champion of the aristocracy derived his unauthorised prerogatives from the suffrage or the passions of a turbulent camp. The position of the rivals was thus exactly reversed, and with it, in the eyes of a nation of formalists, the right seemed to be reversed also.<sup>1</sup>

Cicero had been urged by Caesar, always his friend, and striving to save him against himself, to remain neutral. He wrote to him and sought an interview. Balbus and Oppius, two confidential friends of Caesar, also used their persuasion. They told him that Caesar felt that he could not ask him to bear arms against Pompeius, to whom Caesar knew that he supposed himself to be under an obligation, and that he would be abundantly satisfied if the great orator took no part in the war, or did not side with his enemies. Caesar professed himself anxious to be reconciled with Pompeius, to whom he also bore a personal regard, as having been the husband of his dearly loved child, Julia, and he sought to dissipate the fears of Cicero, and others of the same timorous and vacillating frame of mind, by the assurance that he would take no cruel advantage of his successes, but would, on the other hand, strive to soothe and heal the wounds of his country. 'Let me thus,' said he, 'endeavour, if I can, to win back the hearts of all, and enjoy a lasting victory; for other conquerors have by their severities been unable to escape odium and long maintain success, with the single exception of Sulla, *whom I do not intend to imitate.*'

These were no empty words; the subsequent conduct of Caesar showed that he was sincere; and this he wrote whilst Pompeius his rival was muttering, 'Why cannot I be Sulla?' and was calculating on the blood and plunder with which he would glut his vengeance should victory attend his arms. The conduct of the brief struggle in Epirus showed the difference in the character of the two opponents. When, in stormy weather, some of Caesar's transports crossed from Italy, they were given chase by the squadron of Pompeius. One of Caesar's

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *History of the Romans*, ii. 237.



vessels, with two hundred and twenty young recruits on board, ran by mistake into the wrong harbour, and was surrounded. The Pompeians offered them their life if they would surrender. The young soldiers were sea-sick and frightened: they trusted to the promise, and were immediately put to the sword. Sixteen of the Pompeian vessels ran upon the rocks in pursuit of Caesar's transports, and Caesar spared the lives of every man who fell into his hands. In June Caesar met with a reverse. A weak spot in his lines had been betrayed, and Pompeius flung himself suddenly and unexpectedly upon it. Nearly a thousand men fell, and many hundreds were taken. In the camp of Pompeius was Labienus, Caesar's old lieutenant, who had been won by the gold of the oligarchy. He begged to have the prisoners—his old fellow-soldiers—who had fought under him in Gaul, committed to him, then, mockingly calling them old comrades, he had them butchered before him to the last man.

But on August 9, Caesar retrieved this defeat in the great battle of Pharsalia. Pompeius and his Lords of Misrule were routed and fled in confusion, and Caesar was master of the camp of his enemies, having lost only two hundred of his own men, whilst fifteen thousand of the Pompeians had been cut down in the wild turmoil of panic and flight.

'They would have it so,' said Caesar sadly as he went over the field, littered with the corpses of his enemies. 'After all that I had done for my country, I should have been condemned by them as a criminal, had I not appealed to my army.' The anecdote comes to us on good authority, on that of Asinius Pollio, who was present at the battle.

Some of the worst enemies of Caesar succeeded in making their escape, but twenty-four thousand surrendered. The life of every man was spared. In the tent of Pompeius was found his secret correspondence, involving the names of many who had treacherously feigned friendship for Caesar, whilst betraying what they could learn of his plans. Caesar knew this, but was too magnanimous to take advantage of the opportunity of unmasking them. He threw all the letters into the fire, unread.

Pompeius, flying to Egypt, was there murdered by orders of the young king, Ptolemaeus Dionysus, a boy of thirteen, who, with his sister Cleopatra, occupied the throne of Ptolemaeus the Fluteplayer. The murder was committed on the shore, within sight of the wife of Pompeius on board the ship from which the luckless general had been enticed. Such was the end of a man whose career is well described by Tacitus in few words: 'Cn. Pompeius, in his third consulship, was chosen to correct lapsed morals. His remedies were worse than the maladies. He was the maker and violator of his own laws. What he gained by his arms, with arms he lost.'

The sons of Pompeius had the command of the fleet, and maintained the conflict. Caesar had hoped that the war would end at Pharsalia.

He was disappointed ; it continued in Africa and in Spain. But much work had to be done at Rome, and Caesar hastened thither. Among those who had been in the camp of the Optimates was M. Junius Brutus. He had escaped from the battle, but finding that all was lost, he voluntarily tendered his submission, and, to curry favour with the conqueror, betrayed the direction of the flight of Pompeius. Caesar readily extended his confidence to the son of his friend Servilia, and Brutus exerted his influence to conciliate him towards his friend and brother-in-law C. Cassius. Brutus was a vehement man, narrow-minded, mean to base-ness, but engaging by his impulsiveness. 'I know not,' said Caesar, 'what this young fellow wishes, but whatever he wishes, that he wishes with all his might' (*quidquid vult, valde vult*).



FIG. 16.—M. JUNIUS BRUTUS. Gold Medal, enlarged.

We have extant a good many statuary portraits of Brutus, and none of them are attractive. He combed his hair down over his low forehead, and cut it straight across above the brows. The cheek-bones are high, there is no breadth and no indication of genius in the brow, and the head is round and devoid of the imaginative faculty. The pouting peevish mouth is above a small protruding chin. Indeed, the lower portion of the face is pinched. All the portraits that exist give to his countenance the expression of a cantankerous, pettifogging character.<sup>1</sup>

From his coins, Bernoulli thus summarises the character of the face of Brutus : 'An angular, oblong skull, rather flattened at the top, and projecting. Abundant smooth hair, and a scarcely perceptible beard, merely covering the jaw. The profile not remarkably noble, with projecting mouth and chin. A straight, low brow, and a straight stump

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of M. Junius Brutus :—

1. A medal (gold) with L. Brutus on reverse, from whom he pretended to be descended. M. Brutus wears the civic wreath.
2. A medal (gold) with M. Brutus on obv., on rev. the head of P. Servilius Casca.
3. Two silver coins, interesting, as being described by Dio Cassius. They bear the legend : EID. MART.
4. A fine bronze, of which two examples alone exist, one at Paris, the other at Berlin ; bears no inscription, but is thought to represent M. Junius Brutus.
5. Bust in Capitoline Museum, Hall of Dying Gaul, No. 16 ; end of nose restored, and

nose at a sharp angle with the brow. Finally, a thinness that comes out mainly in the hard outlines of the under jaw and in the meagre neck.'

The beard Brutus wore from the beginning of the civil war, B.C. 49, as a token of grief. He probably shaved after Pharsalia. He could hardly have accepted Caesar's pardon and favour, and maintained the outward symbol of regret for the change. The 'lean and hungry look' that, according to Plutarch, Caesar saw in both Brutus and Cassius, may have provoked his mistrust of the latter, but he had confidence in the former, notwithstanding his hollow cheeks and thin neck.

Brutus had lost his father at the early age of eight years, but his education had been carefully conducted by his mother, Servilia, assisted by her two brothers, and he acquired a relish for literary pursuits, which he preserved to the end of his life. In 59, Brutus was prosecuted on the charge of being an accomplice in a conspiracy against the life of Pompeius, but Caesar, who was then consul, put a stop to the prosecution, as it was well known that Brutus was innocent.

In 58, when Cato was sent to Cyprus, Brutus accompanied him. In 53 he went to Cilicia with his father-in-law, Appius Claudius, and took advantage of the opportunity to lend out money to the provincials at an extortionate and illegal rate of interest. Afterwards, when Cicero was proconsul of Cilicia, Brutus engaged him to recover the money, and although Cicero knew, and represented to him that the usury was monstrous and illegal—yet as a matter of private favour he obtained it for him. The whole transaction was about as dirty as any of the dirty tricks that the correspondence of Cicero exposes to us.

When the tidings of the death of Pompeius, at first received with incredulity, were believed in Rome, and when the defeated nobility found to their unbounded surprise that they need fear no bloody reprisals, the whole aspect of affairs changed. There had been many men, like Cicero, not indeed halting between two opinions, but endeavouring to ingratiate themselves with both leaders. But with the death of Pompeius all doubt ceased, and every scruple about paying court to the victor disappeared. Decrees were issued by the senate investing him with unbounded authority over the two insertions in brow. This fine bust in Greek marble belongs to the last days of the Republic.

A. U. C. 707.  
B. C. 47.  
Act. 55.

6. Bust in the National Museum, Naples; found at Pompeii in 1869; very fine and characteristic.

7. Bust in the Torlonia Gallery; young, about twenty-one; of Greek marble; without the usual surly expression, but hard.

8. Bust in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg, No. 204, from the Campana Collection, and therefore to be mistrusted.

9. Statue in the Villa Albani; a caricature, and poor as a work of art.

10. Bust of him as a boy, Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 305. Probable, but not certain.

11. Life-sized bust, Vatican, Chiaramonti, No. A, 343.

12. Statue in the Louvre, No. 2170; doubtful.

13. Bust in the British Museum, nose broken.

lives and fortunes of those who had not made submission. Such as had fought with Pompeius, and had received pardon, strove to efface the remembrance of the past by the most abject servility. Caesar was created dictator for the period of a year, from October 48, to October 47; but the breaking out of war in Africa and Egypt called him away from Italy. Among the aristocracy, says Dio Cassius, 'every one now sought to outdo the other in adulation, by giving him their votes in the comitia, by their actions and acclamations protesting the love they had long borne him, just as though Caesar had been present before them; for they thought that by this apparently spontaneous enthusiasm some would win for themselves civil or religious offices, others money.'

During the absence of Caesar, faction again troubled the city. He was engaged in the East by the war in Egypt and an expedition against Pharnaces. Rumour spread that he had been defeated and slain.

Of the two tribunes, Dolabella, the son-in-law of Cicero, 'that manikin tied to a long sword,' as Cicero called him, promised the people the abolition of debts; the other, Trebellius, pretended to maintain the authority of the senate. Bloodshed ensued. Rome was given up to contending parties hewing each other down remorselessly. Antonius, Caesar's master of the horse, entered the city with the troops under his command, and quelled the riot by indiscriminate slaughter of those engaged in cutting each other's throats. But faction, long allowed to run riot in Rome, was not to be subdued at once, and fresh outbreaks continued from time to time to disturb the tranquillity of the city, and were only lulled by the periodic rumours of Caesar's approach.

We may here pause for a moment to ask whether there is any justification for the course Caesar had pursued in plunging the commonwealth into civil war. But, in fact, it was the conduct of the infatuated oligarchy and of Pompeius that provoked the war. Caesar had to defend himself. The power to enforce the laws it enacted was gone from the senate, and was lodged in the army; it was gone before Caesar crossed the Rubicon. The old condition of affairs was past, beyond possibility of recall. Military domination was already established when Caesar combined with Pompeius and Crassus in the first triumvirate. Crassus was dead; Pompeius had gone over to the enemy and sought with them the destruction of his former comrade. Caesar had to deal with facts. It was a fact that the centre of gravity of government was transferred to the army. The old constitution had completely failed under the new conditions. The aristocracy sought nothing higher than to secure its own privileges, and the senate set the example of violating the laws. The power of the people was gone. Their officers were venal; they themselves were without convictions, without ambition, without sincerity. All the foundations of the Roman constitution were out of course; and what was needed was a great creative genius to re-establish the constitution on new foundations, to give it a new form, and breathe into it a new life.



The great curse to Rome was its annual elections, that nurtured rivalries and promoted idleness. Conceive what the condition of Great Britain would be were parliamentary elections annual, and the ministry changed every year. Another great obstacle to the natural adaptation of the commonwealth to the burdens placed on it, was the power of veto given to the tribunes. Any single tribune of the ten could block the course of any law, stultify all proceedings in senate and comitia, and was not required to give any reason for his conduct. When, moreover, among the ten tribunes there was always to be found one open to stop a law, on taking a bribe, put into his hand by the minority who had failed to defeat it in the Assembly, then the possibility of governing Rome, let alone the world, was at an end.

The condition of affairs was such that Rome was a prey to every Sulla who could command an army, to every Crassus who could draw the strings of the purses of all men in Rome, to every Clodius who could stir up the rabble, and hire cut-throats to do his bidding.

The republic was staggering to dissolution, incapable of coping with her internal difficulties; she was certain to fall to pieces under the resentment and greed of the provincials and the barbarians beyond her frontiers. By no possibility could she maintain her hold on the world save by a centralisation of authority in one man, not subject to be annually upset, one who could pursue a liberal and consistent policy abroad, and repress the turbulent factions at home.

Caesar had been in the East, he had been in Spain, he had spent long years in Gaul. He knew what were the sufferings of the provinces. He understood that an imperial Rome must have a head, that there must be continuity in its policy, and that this policy must be generous and just. He saw that the rabble of Rome must be curbed, and that the aristocracy of Rome must be held down; that the thoughts of the citizens must be turned from interminable electioneering contests to considerations more wholesome and profitable.

#### VIII.—CAESAR AS DICTATOR.

It was not till after the battle of Munda in Spain, fought on the 17th March, B.C. 45, that the supremacy of Caesar was finally established.

Now his time had come, when he might turn from trampling out the embers of civil war to the reformation and reconstruction of the state. His undisputed tenure of power lasted hardly more than one year and a half, including an interval of ten months' absence from Rome. It was not therefore possible for him to complete the work on which he had set his heart. A body of laws exists bearing his name, but unfortunately we do not

A. U. C. 709.  
B. C. 45.  
Act. 57.

know the date at which each was passed. But one thing we do know, that they were all framed with the one object of bettering a situation of affairs that had become intolerable. The laws—confused and disjointed as they come to us—point decisively to the existence in the mind of their author of a distinct and clearly-thought-out plan for the reconstruction of the national policy. ‘The general principle,’ says Dean Merivale, ‘that pervades them is the elevation of a middle class of citizens to constitute the ultimate source of all political authority. The ostensible ruler of the state is to be, in fact, the creation of this body, its favourite, its patron, its legislator and its captain. He is to watch over the maintenance of an equilibrium of popular forces, checking with the same firm hand the discontent of the depressed nobility, and the encroachments of the aspiring rabble. The eternal principles of rule and order he is to assert as sacred and immutable; but he is to be himself responsible for their application at his own discretion to the varying wants of society. This idea of government was perfectly new to the ancient world.’

Caesar was the first among those who obtained a predominating position in the Roman state who extended his view beyond the politics of the city, and took a really imperial survey of the vast dominions subject to her sway. He extended the franchise, as already said, to the citizens of Gaul beyond the Po, and he gave the same privilege to many communities in Gaul beyond the Alps, and in Spain. He designed to confer the lower form of privilege, called Latin, on the Sicilians, no doubt as a step towards a still further extension of the franchise. He conferred the coveted prize of Roman citizenship on the Gaulish soldiers who formed the legion called *Alauda*, from the lark that was the emblem on their arms; more significant even than this was his enrolment of certain Gallic nobles among the senators. The old citizens looked on aghast. ‘In pity,’ they sneered, ‘let him also furnish them with a guide to show them the way to the senate-house.’ ‘Off with their breeches and on with the toga,’ mocked others; ‘these fellows, who trotted after Caesar’s triumphal car, are now foisted into the senate, and must be dressed for their new parts.’

Caesar planted very few of his veterans in Italy. Most of the public land had been already granted and occupied, and he did not propose to buy out proprietors so as to acquire land to give away. He settled the soldiers in the provinces, and sought by their means to revive Corinth and Carthage to something of their ancient splendour and renown.

He endeavoured to restore the wasted population of Italy by more peaceful methods than military settlements. The marriage tie had become lax in loose times, and he appealed to the vanity of women as a means of bracing it. He suffered the worthy matron to wear pearls and a purple robe. A married man with three children born in wed-

lock at Rome, with four born in Italy, with five born in the provinces, was exempted from certain charges and duties.

The great abuse of slave-labour was difficult to correct. Caesar issued an ordinance forbidding a citizen between twenty and forty years of age being absent from Italy for more than three years. Moreover, he revived an ancient enactment that one-third of the labourers on all estates should be free men.

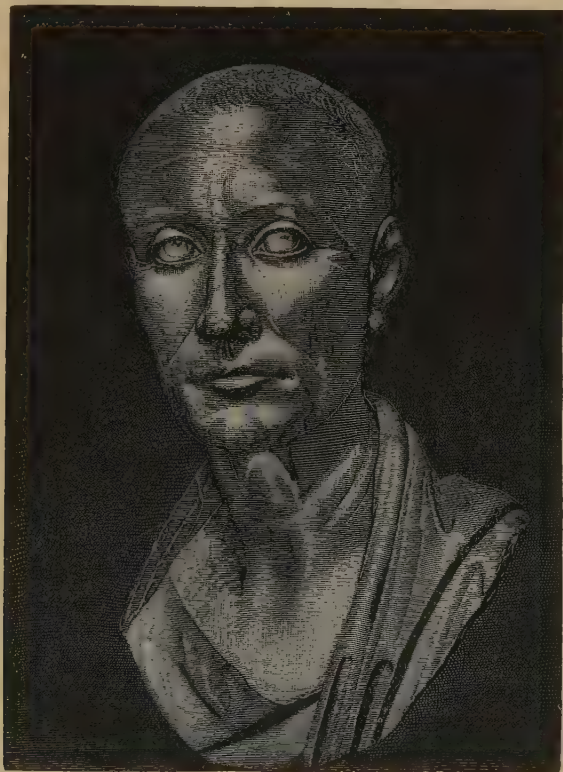


FIG. 17.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in Green Basalt, Berlin.

Caesar meditated the drainage of the Pontine marshes, the complete survey and mapping of the empire; he opened a free public library, the first established in Rome; he designed the codification of the laws.

Of all his reforms, that by which his name is best remembered is the regulation of the calendar. This had fallen out of gear, so that the civil year did not correspond with the solar year by as much as sixty-seven days, and the 1st of January of the year B.C. 45 was reckoned as the 22d of October. Consequently two intercalary months were

inserted between the last day of November and the 1st of December, and so the past error was corrected. To prevent future errors, the year—which had previously been reckoned as consisting of 355 days—was extended to 365 days; each month was lengthened, with the exception of February; and one day was added every four years. Such was the famous Julian Calendar, which, with a slight alteration, has served the world to the present day.

On his return from Spain, Caesar had been named Dictator and Imperator for life. The senate took an oath to guard his person, and his head was placed on the money of the republic. They went so far in their adulation as to declare that he was Divus, something more than human. Caesar could not refuse these flatteries without seeming to treat the senate with disregard, but he well knew the worthlessness of their professions.

Their words, as he was aware, were smoother than butter, but war was in their hearts. He knew that they desired to see him murdered, but he had not shrunk from death in the battle-field, and he did not shrink from it in the forum, where equally he felt he was doing his duty. Life, he did not particularly value. He was a sad man, as are all great men inspired with noble and pure aims, in the midst of a perverse and self-seeking generation. But he had some thoughts to console him for the falsehood and dissimulation that surrounded him, and to stay his heart against the fear of dangers that menaced him. Gaul was becoming a civilised and orderly country, no longer torn by tribal wars. The frontiers of the state were no longer menaced by hordes of barbarians. The franchise had been largely extended and would be extended further. Representatives of conquered people sat in the senate of Rome. What he had done for Gaul would be done—not, perhaps, by him, but by others succeeding him—for Spain, for Africa, and for the East.

He had come, at one time, to the forum, passing through the streets of Rome, attended by a guard. But the senate had solemnly sworn to protect his life. He took them at their word, and dismissed his guard.

Conscious that he had relaid the foundations of the commonwealth, he felt that the work he had begun could not be accomplished in the few years of life that remained to him, even if unshortened by violence, and that the permanency of his institutions could only be secured by the establishment of a permanent head to the state. It may have been this conviction which induced him to allow Antonius, his colleague in the consulship, to offer him the diadem in public on the festival of the

A. U. C. 710.

B. C. 44.

Aet. 58.

Lupercalia; but seeing that the proposition was not favourably received by the people, he resolved to decline it for the present. Royal power he possessed, and, could that be rendered hereditary instead of elective, the state would be saved from furious rivalries and intestinal war. Were not a monarchy established,



then the condition into which the republic would fall back must be one of confusion.

Since the banishment of the kings, the constitution of Rome had been without its keystone. Caesar was sufficiently acquainted with the history of the institutions of Rome to know what the king was in theory, and he doubtless wished to take up the thread of ancient tradition, and, with the citizenship extended to embrace the engrafted states, to try again the old institution on this more extended base. He was proud to be a lineal descendant of one of the best and most liberal-minded of kings. But in the minds of the people, the idea of kingship was connected with abuse of power, and the object of the institution was forgotten. They had forgotten that the king was the representative of the people, the one in whom rested the executive, and that if he acted as a tyrant he violated the constitution. The term King had to the ignorant completely lost its proper signification; and it was, perhaps, impossible for Caesar to sink to the abyss of stupidity and ignorance, and see through the dull eyes and think with the contracted brain of the vulgar. He made a mistake: but he saw it at once, and attempted to retrace his steps.

#### IX.—THE MURDER.

THE offer of the crown to Caesar precipitated the end. A conspiracy against his life had been formed among men who had received numerous kindnesses from him, who had sworn to respect his life and regard as sacrilege an attempt upon it, and who wilfully shut their eyes to the prospect of plunging their country into civil war. They affected zeal for the republic, impatience of despotism, but the majority were actuated by the meanest party jealousy. They were angry because the supreme power had been taken from the hands of an oligarchy which had in every way shown its incapacity to govern. As open warfare had not succeeded, they had recourse to secret assassination. More than sixty persons were privy to the conspiracy.

L. Pontius Aquila was tribune of the people, sullen and envious of Caesar; as the dictator passed his chair in the senate he was the only man who would not rise. But Caesar was above punishing such a slight. Afterwards, with his kindly smile, pitiful also of the bad manners of the man, when some one solicited of him a favour, he turned towards the tribune, and said, 'I grant it if Pontius Aquila will give me leave.'

Another conspirator was L. Minucius Basilus, who had served under Caesar in the Gallic war, and did not suppose that his services had met with sufficient recognition. He was praetor in 45, but Caesar for some reason refused him a province, and instead gave him a handsome sum of money. P. Servilius Casca was another: he was tribune of the people that year; his brother Caius was an intimate friend of Caesar, yet both

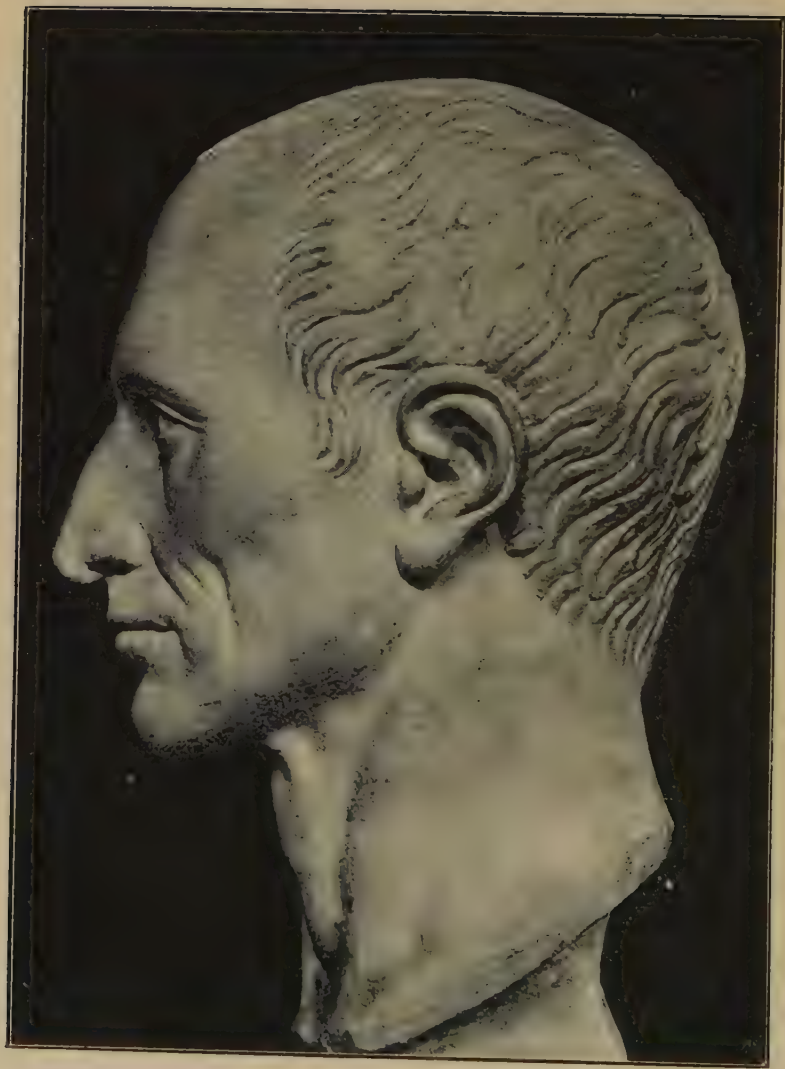


FIG. 18.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Profile of the Bust in the British Museum.

Casces were in the conspiracy, and Publius aimed the first blow. Again, another was L. Tillius Cimber, who had been one of Caesar's warmest supporters, and had been rewarded with the province of Bithynia. His brother, however, was in exile, but he must have known the leniency of Caesar's nature, and have been sure that he had but to ask and his brother would be restored. He was fond of good living and wine, and Seneca quotes a joking question of his: 'What, shall I support a candidate who cannot support overmuch wine?'

Q. Ligarius, an old officer of Pompeius, who had been pardoned and received into favour by Caesar, was another. He was sick and in bed. Brutus visited him. 'It is sad for Ligarius at such a moment as this to be disabled,' said Brutus. The sick man raised himself on his elbow. 'If any project worthy of Brutus be in the wind, I am well,' he answered, and started from his couch to join the conspirators.

The reason why so many of Caesar's old officers and friends were in the plot is that envy which is often found in small minds, among those who have known and assisted a great man in his rise, and who are insatiable in their demands from him when risen, attributing that rise, not to his merits, but to their own petty assistance which they over-estimate.

Of the original Pompeian party several have been mentioned. M. Brutus, who had married Porcia, daughter of his uncle Cato, and brother-in-law of C. Cassius, has already been spoken of. Caesar had given strict orders at Pharsalia that his life should be spared, had freely pardoned him, and had loaded him with favours. A merciless money-lender and extortioner he is proved to have been by Cicero's letters. 'Perhaps Brutus,' says Mr. Long, 'was a philosophical fanatic, who could reconcile contradictories, like those men whose profession of piety does not secure them against excessive love of money and other vices.'

M. Brutus was not above soliciting the province of Macedonia and a consulship from Caesar, and he considered it by no means contrary to his republican principles to accept favours and offices from him. Decimus Brutus was only a distant connection. Decimus was not one of the first members of the plot, but the first conspirators drew him in, because he had in readiness a number of gladiators who might be useful. Both Marcus and Decimus Brutus were doubtless engaged by the other conspirators in the plot because their name recalled to the people the great Brutus who had expelled the kings from Rome.

Some persons put by night papers on the desk of M. Brutus, on which were written, 'You are asleep, Brutus!' and 'You are no true Brutus.' Against the statue of the great Brutus was found one morning a placard, 'Would you were now alive!' and under that of Caesar, 'Brutus was made a consul for casting out the kings. This man has cast out the consuls to become a king.'

M. Junius Brutus pretended to descend from the great king-expeller,

but there were serious difficulties in the way of proving descent. The Junii allied to the Tarquins were certainly patricians. But the true ancestor of Caesar's murderer was a plebeian, M. Junius Brutus, one of the first tribunes of the people in A.U.C. 261 (B.C. 494).

M. Brutus probably lived with his mother and his wife on the Aventine, where was the Servilian house. Porcia, his wife, saw that something was on his mind; she asked him what it was, but he refused to answer. She then wounded herself, and without wincing showed him the wound—'You see: I can suffer and hold my tongue,' said she; 'learn that the daughter of Cato and wife of Brutus can die if need be. Tell me all.'

The confederates discussed the place where the murder was to be committed. Some desired that it should be the Campus Martius, and the time, when Caesar as consul presided at the convocation of the people.<sup>1</sup> Another proposal was that Caesar should be fallen upon in the Via Sacra, as he left his house. Another was that he should be attacked in the theatre of Pompeius.

It was finally decided to murder him in the senate, for the senate, with the exception of those members he had introduced into it, was hostile to him. The curia had been burnt down in a riot, and had not been rebuilt. The senate, accordingly assembled, first in one place, then in another, usually in a temple. To shed blood in a temple would be profanation. It was determined that the deed should be done on the 15th March, the Ides, the feast of Anna Perenna, when there would be an exhibition of gladiatorial combats in the theatre of Pompeius. The senate met in a semicircular portico adjoining the theatre. Pompeius had built it, and set there his statue, little thinking that he had prepared it as the place of sacrifice for his rival. Anna Perenna was an old Latin divinity, who was said to have carried cakes to the plebeians when they retired to the Mons Sacer.

On that day the son of Cassius assumed the toga as having attained manhood. From the Capitol to which he ascended with the boy for this rite, he could watch the door of Caesar's house. Brutus occupied his chair as praetor in the portico of Pompeius.

There was almost certainly a general suspicion in the city that a conspiracy was formed against the dictator, but none knew, save those in it, when and where the blow would fall. Caesar himself was not free from presentiment of evil. He was supping with Lepidus the evening before the Ides, and the conversation had turned on what kind of death was most to be desired. 'The unexpected,' was the verdict of Caesar.

<sup>1</sup> The point of this proposal may possibly have lain in this: In remote times, so the legend went, the Romans were accustomed to throw their aged parents over the Pons Sublicius into the Tiber. Then the expression 'To throw over the bridge' came to be employed of the withdrawing from a man his right to vote, and if Caesar were actually thrown over the wooden bridge that led to the voting-booths, it would signify that his political life was closed.



Decimus Brutus was there when he said it, for Caesar had taken him along with him, as a friend, to the supper.

Caesar used to say that his life was of more value to his country than to himself; and that it was better to endure all that treachery could do than to be constantly on the watch against enemies.

There were strange presages. Caesar's horses refused their food. The shields in the temple of Vesta that adjoined his house, clashed in the night as they had on the eve of the irruption of the Cimbri. As Caesar slept near his wife Calpurnia, suddenly the window was dashed open, and the moonlight flooded the room. Caesar started up, and looked at his sleeping wife. Sighs and murmurs escaped her lips. She was dreaming that in her arms lay her dead husband.

At break of day, Calpurnia entreated Caesar not to leave the house till he had consulted an augur. Caesar sent for one or two, and they told him that the signs were unfavourable. Accordingly, he despatched a message to Antonius to adjourn the assembly of the senate to another day.

Brutus and Cassius, who were now together in the portico of the theatre awaiting his arrival, were filled with consternation, and their fears were augmented by a singular incident. A senator, addressing Casca with a significant smile, said: 'You have concealed your secret from me, but Brutus has taken me into his confidence.' In another moment Casca would have pressed his hand and dropped significant words, but the other went on to allude to his meditated competition for the ædileship, and Casca breathed freely, seeing that he had escaped the peril of inadvertently divulging his secret. Almost at the same moment, Popillius Laenas whispered to Brutus, 'What you have on hand, despatch speedily,' and dived back among the crowd. It was never known to what he referred, but the conscious assassins were disconcerted, and Decimus was sent to the house of Caesar to ascertain the cause of his non-arrival. Decimus had been with him at supper the night before in the house of Lepidus. Caesar had the utmost confidence in him, and the wretch used this confidence now to combat his doubts, to persuade him to defy the auguries and disregard his wife's entreaties. To stay at home and to adjourn the senate, he represented, was to offer it a slight. Caesar had lately offended this touchy body by not rising before it—according to one account, his dress was held down by Cornelius Balbus; probably by inadvertence, certainly not as a matter of studied discourtesy, for Caesar was the most courteous of men. Now he remembered this offence, and rather than again touch the susceptibilities of the senators he yielded to Brutus and left the house with him. Hardly had the sound of his steps died away ere a slave besought an audience of Calpurnia, and declared to her that there was some design in agitation against her husband's life. But it was now too late to stay him.

One can follow exactly the course taken by Caesar that day. From the Regia, the pontifical house he occupied on the Via Sacra, he passed under the arch of Fabius into the forum. Turning to the left, by the Tuscan street, he reached the southern height of the Capitol. 'A strange coincidence,' says M. Ampère; 'this was the triumphal course reversed. Caesar had gone precisely this way in his chariot, but in a contrary direction.' On his left was the temple of Good Fortune, before which on his day of triumph a wheel of his chariot had been broken. Then he passed through the Porta Carmentalis into the Field of Mars.



FIG. 19.—M. JUNIUS BRUTUS. Bust in the National Museum, Naples.

On his way, more than one person pressed towards him to warn him of his danger. But the conspirators to whom that part of the business was assigned crowded closely about him, and the press of his attendants was almost too great to allow of the approach of a stranger. There is a story oft repeated, that an augur, Spurinna, had warned Caesar to beware of the Ides of March, and that Caesar, on his way, seeing the

man, said to him smilingly, 'The Ides of March are here.' To which Spurrina answered, 'Yes, but they are not yet over.' Artemidorus, a Cnidian Greek and a friend of Caesar, brought a small roll that contained information which he desired to communicate ; but as he observed that Caesar gave each roll as he received it to the attendants, he drew very near, and said : ' This, Caesar, you alone must read, and read it at once, for it concerns you mightily.' Caesar took the roll, but was prevented from reading it by the pressure of the multitude, and he entered the senate holding the epistle in his hand.

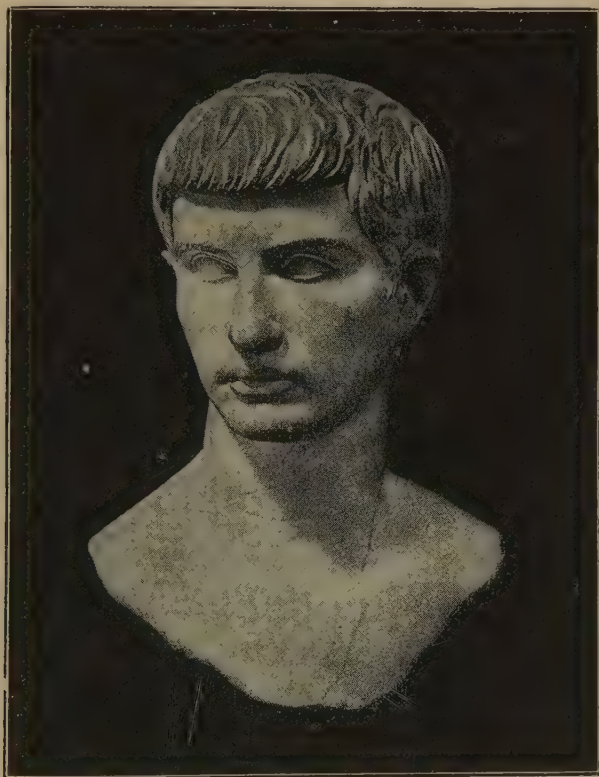


FIG. 20.—M. JUNIUS BRUTUS. Bust in the Capitoline Museum, Rome.

At that moment, Popilius Laenas, whose mysterious words had set the conspirators in a flutter, was seen to emerge from the throng, and hold Caesar in close conversation. The assassins now felt certain that Laenas was informing him of the plot, and they half-drew their daggers to plunge them into their own hearts. But Brutus observed that the gestures of Laenas were those of a man suing for a favour, and he reassured his confederates. Laenas kissed Caesar's right hand, and withdrew.

In the meantime, Marcus Antonius, the consul, was designedly detained by Trebonius outside the portico, where he could neither see nor hear what took place. The conspirators feared Antonius, who was young, possessed of great readiness, and attached to Caesar.

At the moment of Caesar's entry, all the senate rose. He had not been expected, and his gilded chair had been removed. This was brought back, and Caesar seated himself. At once Cimber, one of the confederates, approached him to ask the favour of the restoration of his brother who was exiled. Caesar hesitated. Then Cimber seized his toga, and dragged it in such a manner as to expose his throat. This was the preconcerted signal, and he cried out in Greek, 'Why do you delay?' Then he caught Caesar's hands and kissed them—the kiss of Judas.

Instantly P. Casca, who had placed himself behind the chair, aimed a blow at the dictator's throat, but missed his aim, and the blade wounded his breast. Caesar, shaking his hands free from Cimber, started up and grasped the dagger, as he exclaimed: 'What are you doing, villain?' Casca called to his brother for help. Then the whole murderous pack fell upon their noble victim. In the struggle, his side was exposed, and he was wounded there. Cassius stabbed him in the face, and he returned the blow with his stylus, and wounded him. Then M. Brutus dealt him a blow in the groin. When Caesar received this, and saw who had struck him, he exclaimed in Greek, 'And thou—too, my son?' Then, he no longer attempted to defend himself, and folding his head and feet in his toga, sank at the foot of the statue of Pompeius, drenched in his blood, pierced with thirty-five wounds, full of dignity in the supreme moment.

#### X.—THE CHARACTER OF CAESAR.

THERE, over this prostrate body, we may pause to speak of the man as he was known—not to the general public, but to his inner circle of friends. Of that kindly and gracious courtesy that marked his relations to all men, something has already been said. That it won the hearts of the women was not marvellous, and his detractors took advantage of the fact to besmirch his memory with slander.

I will quote here Mommsen's estimate of his abilities and character.

'From earliest youth, Caesar was a statesman in the truest sense of the word, and his aim was the highest to which it is accorded man to strive after;—the political, military, intellectual, and moral regeneration of his deeply depraved nation, and of that Hellenistic people most intimately related to his own, but one still more depraved. The hard school of thirty years' experiences altered his views as to the means how to attain to this end, but not as to the end itself—that remained ever before him, in times of hopeless depression and of unbounded success,





FIG. 21.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the Vatican,  
Museum Chiaramonti, No. 107.

in times when taking his dark course as demagogue and conspirator, and when as part possessor of supreme power, and when as sole monarch he could execute his work in the full blaze of sunlight before all eyes. All his measures that have lasted, passed at various epochs, fit together into a consistent and purposeful whole. Of isolated attempts of Caesar we need not speak, for Caesar created nothing that was isolated. With justice is Caesar praised as a speaker, on account of his manly eloquence ; setting at naught all the rules of rhetoric, it was like a clear flame that lightened and warmed at once. With justice is Caesar admired for his literary skill, because of the inapproachable simplicity of his composition,

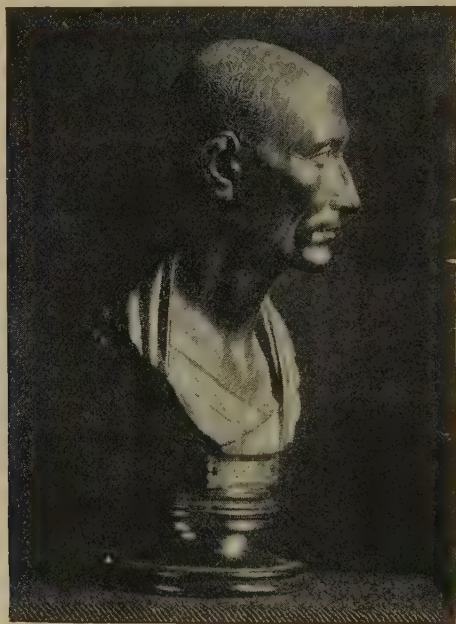


FIG. 22.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Profile of the Green Basalt Bust at Berlin.

the unique purity and beauty of his language. With justice has Caesar been lauded as the greatest general of all times, for, untrammelled by routine and tradition, he—like no other—always hit upon that way in which to carry out a war wherein, under certain conditions, the enemy must be defeated, a way therefore which, under these conditions, was the right one ; who, with the surety of divination, found the right means for doing whatever he undertook ; who, after a defeat, was ever like William of Orange (the taciturn) prompt to recover, and with a victory finish the campaign. But all this was subsidiary matter in Caesar. He was a great speaker, writer, general, but he was each of these because he was

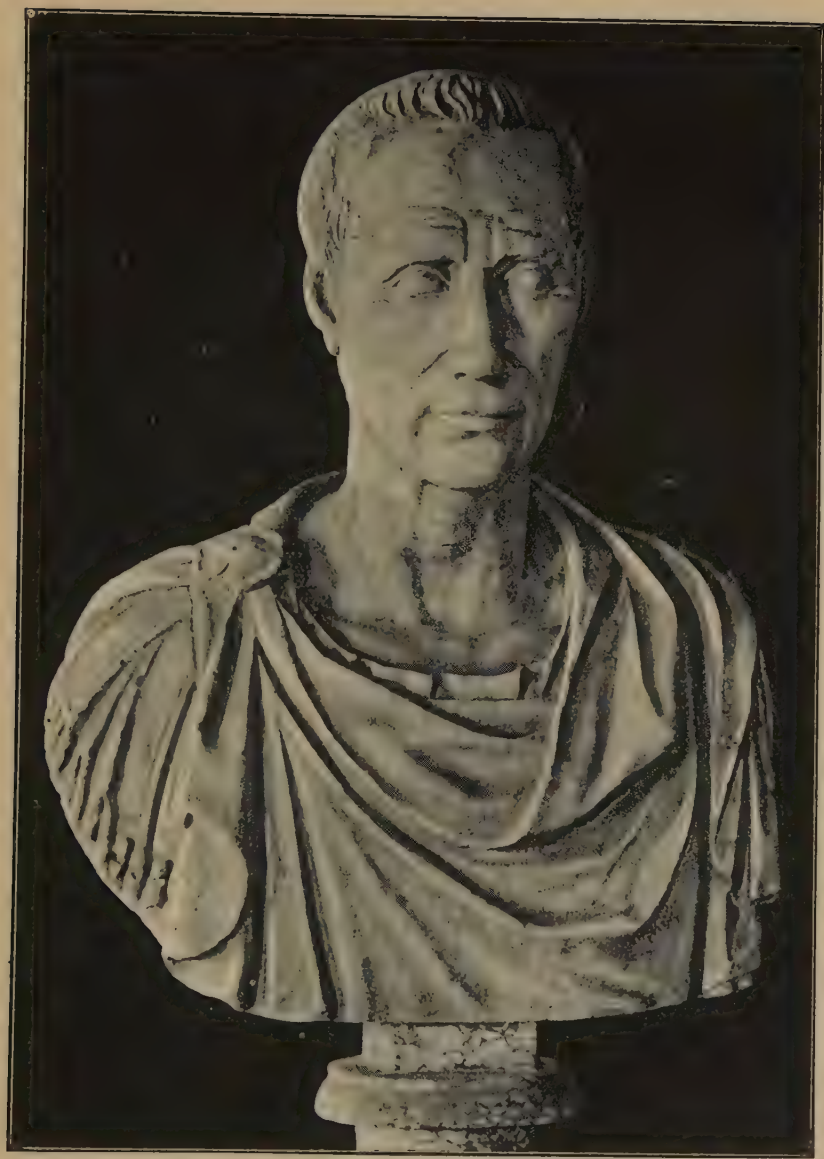


FIG. 23.—C. JULIUS CAESAR. Bust in the Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 272.

a perfect statesman. The soldier in him plays but a passing part ; and this is what distinguishes him from Alexander, Hannibal, and Napoleon, that in him it is not the character of the officer but the leader of the people that governs all his political activity. His original plan was to attain his end, like Pericles and Caius Gracchus, without having recourse to arms, and for eighteen years he acted as leader of the popular party engaged exclusively in political plans and intrigues, till reluctantly convinced of the necessity of having military force at his back, at the age of forty he put himself at the head of an army. It is explicable, therefore, that afterwards there remained in him rather the statesman than the general—like Cromwell, who also rose from being leader of the opposition to be a military chief and democratic king ; whom, in his career, as in his objects, Caesar more resembled than any other personage in history.

‘All his undertakings were directed towards one goal, on which he kept his eye and from which he never swerved. Although a master of the art of war, yet with statesmanly consideration he did his utmost to avoid civil war ; and when it was forced on him, he strove to keep his laurels unstained with blood. Although the founder of the military monarchy, yet with an energy unexampled in history, he checked everything like a praetorian domination. The most remarkable feature of his statesmanly work is its perfect harmony. And for this, the most difficult of human operations, all the conditions were united in Caesar. A thorough realist, he never suffered himself to be confused by sentimental adhesion to the past and to tradition ; and in politics he looked to the living present and to common sense. A born ruler of men, he governed the dispositions of men as the wind governs the clouds, and he brought under his influence and control the most divergent natures, the smug citizen, and the blunt sergeant, the noble ladies of Rome and the beautiful princesses of Egypt and Mauritania, the swashbuckler cavalry officer and the calculating banker. His power of organisation is marvellous ; never did any other statesman or general bring together and direct to one object, the many and perverse elements with which he had to deal, whether they were civil or military ; never did a ruler judge and appreciate his tools with more justice, and set each to accomplish its most suitable task.

‘He was monarch, but never played the part of king. As sovereign lord of Rome, he remained tractable and obliging, agreeable and courteous in conversation, and accessible to all. He seemed to wish to be the first only among his equals. Never did he commit the error of carrying the tone of command from the army into the Senate ; he never had recourse to a brutality like the 18th Brumaire. He was monarch, but his head was not turned. Perhaps he is the only one among the Lord’s mighty ones, who in great as in little never acted on whim or prejudice, but always, without exception, in accordance with his duty ; and,



when looking back on his past life, though he may have regretted many a false estimate, he could not a single fault committed through passion. He is finally, perhaps, the only one of these same mighty ones who, with statesmanlike tact, limited his efforts to achieve the possible, and did not, as is the case with so many, when lifted to such a pinnacle, attempt that which he could not carry through. He never neglected to do the best possible by straining after an impossible excellence, and never sought to soothe, where he could not cure, intractable evils. When he knew that the voice of Fate spoke he bowed at once. Such was this unique man, whom to describe seems so easy, and yet is so vastly difficult. His whole nature is of transparent purity. Such a personality may be described with deeper or more shallow insight, but in its main features it is unmistakeable, and yet no one yet has succeeded in thoroughly reproducing it. And the secret lies in its perfection. Humanly and historically, Caesar stood at the point of equation of the great contradictions of Fortune. Of vigorous creative genius, and of the clearest intelligence, not a youth, and not an old man, full of the highest desire, and capable of the highest accomplishment, full of republican ideas and yet born to be a king, a Roman to the smallest fibre and yet called on to conciliate in himself and in society the Hellenic and the Roman cultures, Caesar proved himself to be a man in full integrity and perfection of being; when, therefore, once in a thousand years absolute perfection is presented to the historian, he throws up his task, and keeps silence.'

It is somewhat remarkable that Caesar should be represented to us as a man who was a professed atheist, and yet no face, among all the busts that have come to us from the classic epoch, is so completely that of the highest and purest ecclesiastical type as that of Caesar. Put on a biretta, and the face is that of an Italian saintly confessor. The lofty arched crown of the head is that of an idealist, it is full of reverence; and that wonderful, far-looking, up-raised eye, that we see in all the best busts, is that of a man looking away from the world into a region of abstractions, with a strange mixture of longing and of sadness. The raised eye is so exceptional, so unique among Roman busts, that it must have been a characteristic of Caesar.

It was said that Caesar was an unbeliever in God. In the gods many and demigods many that peopled the Roman and Greek pantheon he was certainly no believer; but he always showed his conviction in a 'Genius' or a Providence above him. A sneer has been cast at him for ascending the steps of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol at his triumph upon his knees, as a piece of grovelling superstition; but of superstition there was no trace in Caesar's mind. It is far more probable that in the day of his highest glory he felt that all he had, and all he had done were due to the protection of the All-Father, that mysterious, undefined, unrevealed, yet acknowledged Providence, which a man of his genius and earnestness of mind could hardly fail to believe in, and

that he desired to testify this by this outward act. He can hardly have denied what was clear to such as Horace—

Reges in ipsos imperium est Jovis.

Suetonius says that he pillaged the temples in Gaul, forgetful of the fact that there were no temples there, and that in Gaul the Druids were his best friends. Indeed, of temples he was scrupulously careful. Varro had robbed that of Hercules at Gades, but Caesar restored to it the gold. When Metellus Scipio threatened to despoil the temple of Diana at Ephesus, Caesar protected it.

It may be a strange thing to say, and yet, with his history before us, it seems to me that Caesar was one of the most lovable and admirable characters of whom we have record.

A few anecdotes have been preserved—unhappily only a few—that serve to show how courteous and kindly a man he was in private life.

One evening he was supping at the table of an acquaintance. The oil was rancid. The guests left their viands unconsumed, turning up their noses, and looking at each other. Not so Caesar: to spare the feelings of his host, he ate what was set before him, and continued to speak as though he did not observe the unpleasant taste of the condiment. On a journey with Oppius he came to a small hut, in which was a single bed. Oppius was feverish, unwell. Caesar insisted on his having the bed, and he flung himself on the ground to sleep. He was always ready to give praise to his officers and soldiers when they deserved it, and to palliate their mistakes when not due to negligence. His influence with them was great, with his soldiers permanent. They cheerfully underwent extremity of hardships when he required it of them. The 10th legion was mutinous, disappointed that it had not received as much prize-money as was expected. He brought it to submission by a word—‘*Quirites*—citizens!’ Once when panic had seized his troops, and the standard-bearer was preparing to fly, Caesar took him by the shoulders, turned him round, and said, ‘Friend, you have mistaken your way.’ The threatened rout was converted into a victory.

Caesar paid a visit to Cicero, with whom he had had a literary passage-of-arms over the character of Cato, and we have a curious account of this interview from the pen of Cicero. Caesar walked on the sea-shore for a while, and then came to his host’s house, and took a bath. While thus refreshing himself, an attendant recited to him a scurrilous epigram made against him by the fashionable poet Catullus.<sup>1</sup> Caesar listened without showing any emotion. He was accustomed to this foul abuse. It wounded him, but he would not revenge it. Catullus afterwards apologised for this lampoon, and was frankly

<sup>1</sup> There are two by Catullus, xxix. and lvii. It is not known which it was that was read to Caesar. It is on stuff such as this that Suetonius relies for his scandalous accusations.

pardoned, and invited to sup with Caesar. One may question whether a Christian prince would have been so forbearing.

It is perhaps well here to mention a scandalous story, relative to Caesar, that is repeated by historians, without much scruple or investigation of the grounds on which it rests. It is possible enough, though not certain, that Caesar fell under the fascinations of the beautiful queen of Egypt, whilst he was in Alexandria. Cleopatra had a son in B.C. 47, and out of compliment to Caesar called him Caesarion. That was sufficient for the malevolent in Rome to declare that the child owed its paternity to Caesar when he was in Egypt. But this was not enough. They declared, so as to excite the prejudices of the Roman populace, that Caesar meditated the divorce of Calpurnia, that he might marry the Egyptian queen, and legitimatise his son so as to leave to him the empire over the Roman world. So far malicious gossip, the purpose of which is obvious enough. Historians have gone further. They tell us that Caesar actually invited Cleopatra to Rome, for this purpose, and gave up to her his gardens and villa on the Janiculum, beyond the Tiber. Now the story of Caesar's fatherhood of Caesarion was denied emphatically by Oppius, the most intimate friend of the dictator, when Antonius somewhat later asserted it for the sake of annoying Octavius. As to the invitation to Cleopatra to come to Rome, and accepted by her, it rests on no better evidence than two vague allusions in the letters of Cicero to the presence of a queen in Rome at the time of the murder of Caesar. He says that on hearing the tidings she fled. Now, as it happens, we do know that Caesar had sent Berenice, sister of Cleopatra, to Rome, and it is not at all unlikely that this is the person to whom Cicero refers.

But had there been any amour carried on by Caesar with Cleopatra, there almost certainly would be a trace of such a report in the letters of Cicero to Atticus, for he picked up and detailed to his friend all the gossip of the city, but there is none. Suetonius says, indeed, that Caesar invited Cleopatra to Rome, and sent her back laden with presents. That is possible; but, if so, then she was not the queen who fled when she heard of his murder. The story of Suetonius does not agree with the allusion in Cicero.

Had Caesarion been the child of the great dictator, we may be sure Caesar would have mentioned him in his will, and left him to the protection of the Roman people. But he did not allude to him by a word, and it was regarded as a singular and pointed slight for a Roman not to leave something to every friend and kinsman. This was felt by Pompeius when Sulla passed him over in his testament.

As Suetonius admits, Caesar at the time of his murder was in failing health and weary of life. That was one reason why he cared not to surround himself with guards. An odd time for an old man to be intriguing with a young foreign woman.

Every kind of malevolent report that could prejudice Caesar with the multitude was diligently spread. It was said that he was going to abandon Rome and rebuild Troy, and make that the capital of the world, because the sacred Julian race was supposed to come from thence. We shall notice presently another abominable rumour that was circulated concerning him.

#### XI.—PORTRAITS OF JULIUS CAESAR.

THE head of Caesar in profile is found on numerous coins and on medals of the great families. The first coin struck in his honour with his bust on it was in B.C. 44, only two months before his murder—struck by the master of the mint, Flaminius Chilo; others were struck by M. Mettius, L. Aemilius Buca, and C. Cossutius Maridianus. These were the only coins struck during his life, and the type of face on all these varies considerably; on those struck later there is also a considerable variation. A gold coin of Agrippa of the year B.C. 38 gives a youthful portrait. Yet though there are great differences in the way in which Caesar is represented, there is a certain likeness running through them all.

##### *Statues and Busts.*

1. A statue of Julius Caesar, nude, and about 28, in the Louvre, a magnificent specimen of Greek sculpture. This statue was for long supposed to represent Germanicus. In my opinion it is indubitably a youthful Julius Caesar. See Figs. 6 and 7.

It seems to me not improbable that this statue suggested to Horace his second Ode, in which he invokes Augustus, under the form of the youthful Mercury, to be the avenger of the death of Julius Caesar. *Why* Horace should associate this idea of Hermes with the avenging of the death of the great dictator has never appeared very obvious. But if this statue of Julius Caesar as Hermes was well known to him, the chain of ideas is clear at once. . . Octavius, at the same age, or at all events, in youth, succeeds to the divine attributes of his adoptive father, and avenges him. In the ode there are two points needing explanation, first, why Octavius is represented with the attributes of Mercury; and secondly, why he, as Mercury, is sent against the murderers of Julius Caesar. With the statue before us we understand both points.

2. The statue in the Palacé of the Conservatori, in armour with chlamys. It was found in the forum of Caesar. Only the point of the nose and some patching of the cheeks are new. Of the genuineness of this there can be no question. It is a work above the average, but the face is somewhat characterless. Figs. 10 and 11.



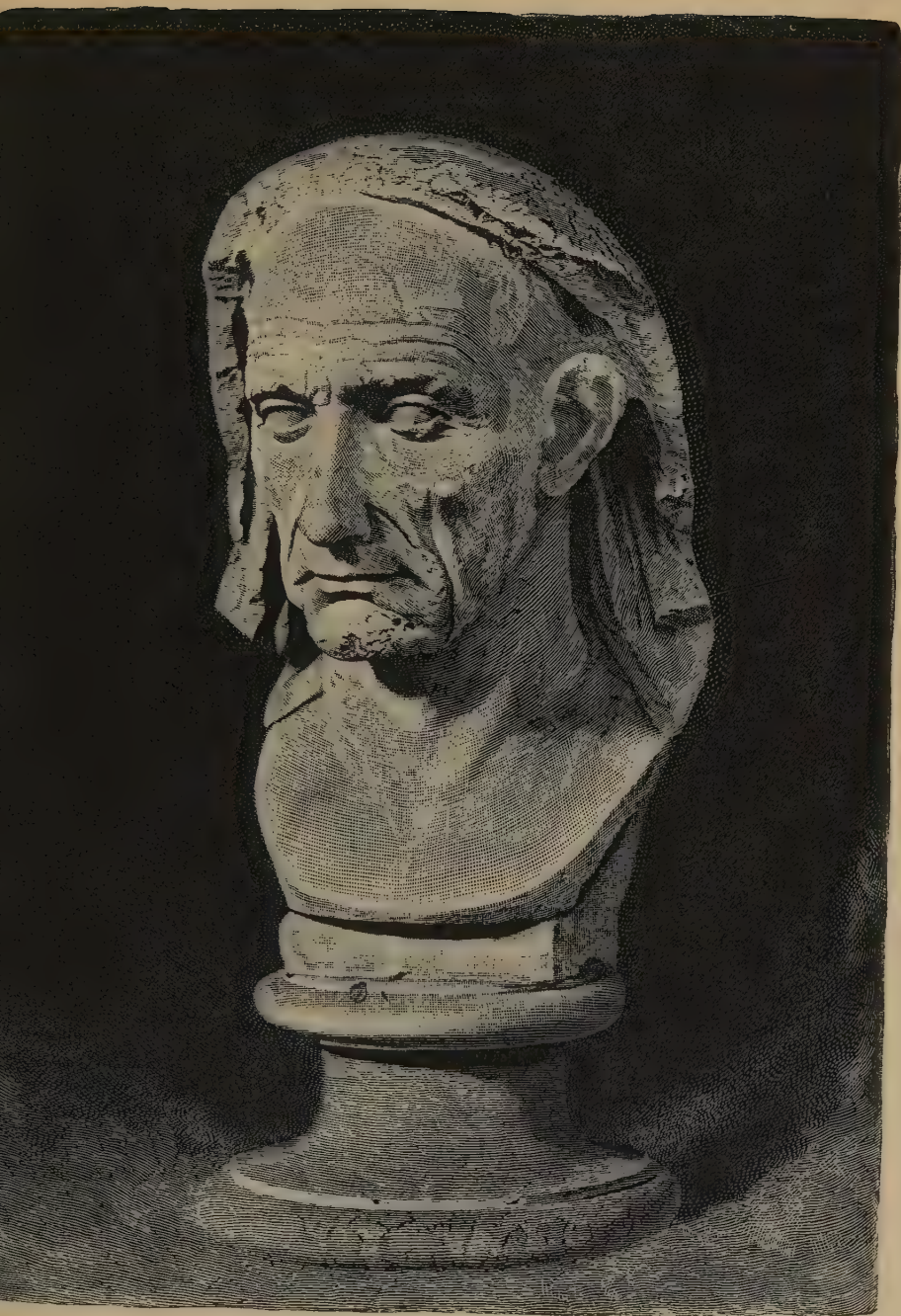


FIG 24.—C. JULIUS CAESAR, as Pontifex Maximus in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 135.

3, 4. Statue in the Berlin gallery, in toga, holding a roll in the left hand, the right extended. The head is that of Caesar, but did not originally belong to this statue. It came from the Polignac collection, whereas the trunk was found in 1825 at Colonna, near Rome. The head is admirable, and is almost identical with that in the Hall of Busts, in the Vatican, No. 272. The expression is kindly. In the Vatican bust the nose has been restored. Fig. 23.

5. Bust in the Chiaramonti Museum, No. 107; resembles the profile on the coins of the Flaminian family; perhaps one of the best in Rome after that already mentioned. Figs. 12 and 21.

6. Bust of Caesar, aged, veiled as Pontifex Maximus. Vatican, Mus. Chiaramonti, No. 135; Bernoulli doubts this, as the apparent age is 70. But hard warfare and many cares had aged Caesar beyond his years. Fig. 24.

7. Bust in the Villa Borghese, veiled; resembles the last.

8. Bust in the Campo Santo at Pisa; a very interesting bust, but with nose and chin restored, and too much hair on the top of the head; anyhow, intended for Caesar. Fig. 9.

9. Bust at Turin, resembling somewhat that of the Berlin statue (3).

10. Bust at Parma, about one-third life-size; admirable.

11. Colossal bust at Mantua, of the same type.

12. Bust at Catajo, also of the same type.

13. Basalt or diorite bust at Berlin; the eyes of which are paste. This is a very characteristic head; but the form of the skull is quite different from other representations, and it is possible that it may have been given this shape through some exigency of the stone. The same thing was done in intaglios occasionally. The hair is merely scratched in. This was a favourite bust with Frederick the Great, who purchased it from the Julienne collection. There are wonderful strength and energy in the head, mingled with gentleness and kindness. Figs. 17 and 22.

14. Bust at Florence, draped, aged, and consequently mistrusted as a portrait by Bernoulli. It is not characteristic, nor is another in the same gallery purporting to be a head of Caesar.

15. Bust in the British Museum, of coarse white marble. Figs. 15 and

18. This splendid bust is full of character, especially observable in the profile. There is a wondrous expression of kindness, sincerity, and patient forbearance with the weaknesses of mankind in the face, also a little weariness of the strain of life. The eye is raised, looking far beyond the horizon. This admirable head, in the opinion of Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor, was *not* done from the life; there are errors in the anatomical structure that show this. The cheek-bone is a plane, not a ridge; the width of the skull above the ears would be impossible in fact. But though this portrait was not done from the life, it was done by a man who knew Julius Caesar well, who had seen him over and over again, and had been so deeply impressed by his personality that he has

given us a better portrait of the man than if he had done it from life. He has caught, and has exaggerated, the peculiarities that struck him—such as the width of the skull, the mass of common sense balancing and controlling the imagination—he knew nothing of phrenology, but he was struck and amazed at the massiveness of the lower portions of the skull. Again, from intimate acquaintance with his model, he caught and reproduced those peculiarities of his expression which Caesar's face had when in repose, the sweet, sad, patient smile, the reserve of power in the lips, and that far-off look into the heavens, as of one searching the unseen, and trusting in the Providence that reigned there.

I was in Mr. Dressler's studio at the time when the controversy was raging relative to Mr. Stanley's rear-guard. Curiously enough, this accomplished sculptor had completed a bust of the African explorer modelled from life, and he had in his studio a cast from the British Museum bust of Caesar, so that I could look from one to another and compare these heads. Was it wonderful that there came into my mind the thought of how differently the two men had dealt with their subalterns? Julius Caesar had an unsatisfactory lieutenant, Curio, who in Africa by mismanagement lost two legions intrusted to him. And how did Caesar treat his lieutenant, who perished with his men? In his memoirs he mentions the disaster, but deals with the memory of the dead man with the utmost tenderness. 'The young man's youth had much to do with the disaster,' he wrote: 'his former success moreover, and his faith in his own good fortune': not a word of reproach escapes him, and one has but to look at the delicately formed lower portion of the face, to see that in Caesar there was not only the highest refinement of culture, but also a patience, a forbearance, a charity that would be sublime even in a Christian.

Mr. Dressler placed for me beside the bust of Caesar, one certainly taken from life, of the Renaissance period, representing a Florentine. In this latter face every anatomical particular was correct; but looking at it, one could read naught of the soul that had been lodged within. It suggested nothing. It was a bust studied from a man about whom the sculptor knew nothing and cared less. It reproduced, accordingly, every pimple and every wrinkle, but let one into none of the mysteries of the soul of the model. On the other hand that of Caesar, inaccurate anatomically, gives us a lively picture of the intellectual, moral, spiritual man, rather than of his flesh and muscles and bones. The artist forgot the scar—he forgot the baldness, in the radiancy of the soul that shone out of that impressive, beautiful face. In this does the British Museum bust differ from that other bust, in its way hardly inferior, in the Louvre. This latter (16) is perfectly true to life; it is taken from Caesar in action by a man who had watched and studied Caesar in his wars, and he gives us an anatomically correct Caesar as a soldier. The sculptor of the



British Museum bust gives us a spiritually correct Caesar as a man of peace.

16. Bust in the Louvre,—a truly marvellous portrait, though it lacks the repose of the two former. It gives the face of Caesar in battle, his intellect concentrated, resolution formed, watchful, determined. It is of a somewhat younger Caesar than the two already mentioned. A band or fillet is around the head. Fig. 13.

17. Colossal bust at Naples. This Bernoulli puts first in his list. Mr. Dressler cast it out as hardly deserving consideration, as devoid of artistic value, in this confirming my own judgment of it as all but worthless as a piece of portraiture. It is a mere stock bit of sculpture to represent Julius Caesar, but not from life, not by any one who had seen the living man. It is idealised from other busts, and is absolutely soulless. In some of the busts there appear traces of a scar on the left cheek.

There are many other busts, intended for Julius Caesar, but of inferior value, none that I know beside these mentioned that can be regarded as life studies. To my mind the most admirable, as representing the man, as he lived, as he looked, and clearly the work of men who had studied him alive, are the British Museum bust, the Louvre bust, the diorite bust at Berlin, the marble statue bust at Berlin, and that which closely resembles it in the Vatican; and, lastly, those at Pisa and Parma.

Of gems representing Caesar there are many; a list is given by Bernoulli. I may draw attention to the two fine full-face engraved gems in the British Museum (engraved in the Official Catalogue). Of these, one, No. 1557, is the finest. Both are copies of the same original.



# MARCUS ANTONIUS

## I.—AFTER THE MURDER.

CAESAR lay dead at the feet of the statue of Pompeius that had been cast down by the people, but which he had set up. The senate, mastered by terror, fled in disorder.

M. Brutus attempted a harangue, but no one remained to listen.

A.U.C. 710.  
B.C. 44.  
15 March.

Hard by was the circus of Pompeius, into which the populace had crowded for a show of gladiators. The tidings of the murder reached them on their benches; the buzz of voices ceased, and in silence all rose and left by the wide vomitories, and dispersed through the town, giving the alarm on their way. On all sides were heard cries of 'Save yourselves! close your doors!' and bolts were thrust and windows barred.

Surprised at their isolation, the conspirators withdrew from the curia. They had intended to cast Caesar's corpse into the Tiber, but now, frightened at the effect of the general dismay produced by their act, they thought only of themselves, and, escorted by the gladiators of Decimus, flourishing their bloody daggers in mock heroics, and wrapping their togas about their left arms in real dread of attack, they proceeded to the forum, where they hoisted a cap of liberty on a spear. But this neither roused enthusiasm nor encountered resistance. The conspirators were cowed. They had calculated on an outburst of applause, and expected to have been carried on the shoulders of the people in triumph to the capitol. Disappointed and frightened, they ascended to the temple of Jupiter, under pretence of offering their vows there, and, these heights occupied, the gladiators of Decimus were in position to resist an attack from below. The retreat saved them from collision with a body of troops hastily marched into the forum by Lepidus.

The body of Caesar lay for some hours where it had fallen, but finally three of his slaves summoned courage to place it in the litter in which he had arrived at the curia, and carried it to the house where Calpurnia awaited it with tears. Owing to there being but three bearers, the litter lurched on one side, so that one arm of the dead man hung out.

As the shades of evening fell, one by one the timid nobles ascended to the capitol to congratulate the conspirators on their achievement,

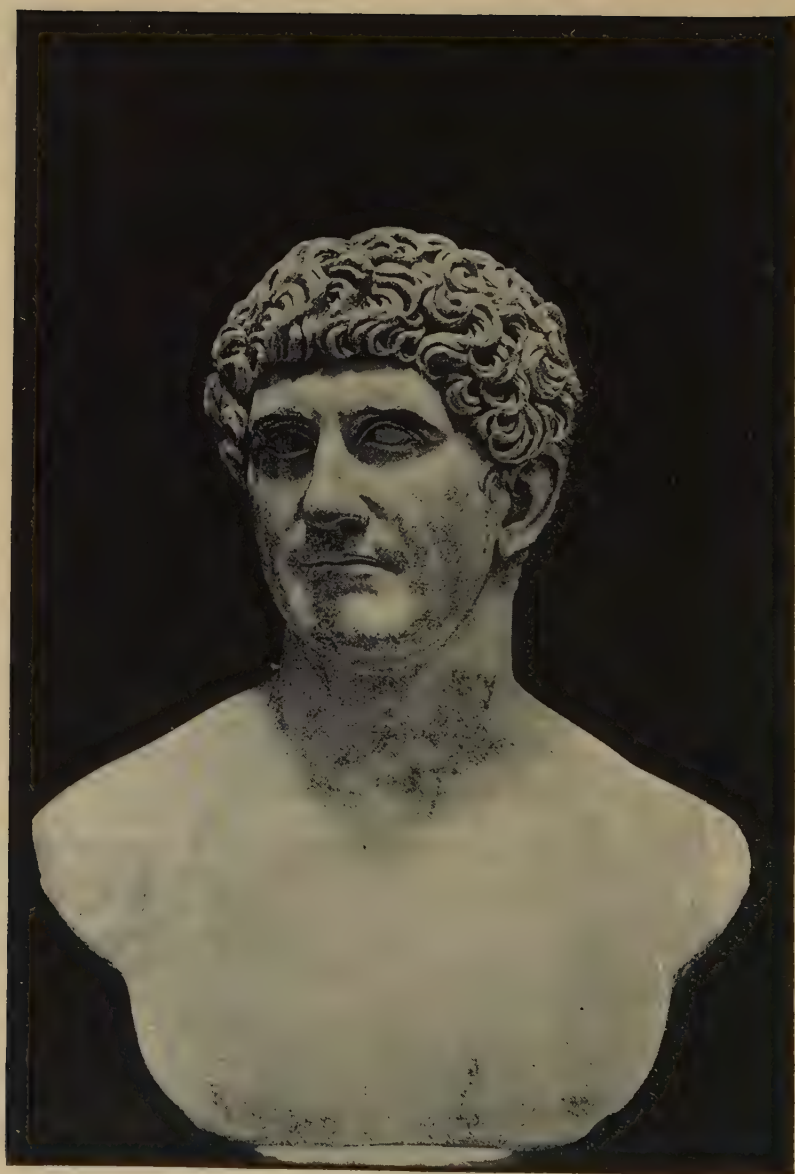


FIG. 25.—M. ANTONIUS. Bust in the Vatican, Braccio Nuovo, No. 97A.  
[Said to have been found at the Tor Sapienza, Rome, along with  
two others, Augustus and Lepidus.]

and to offer their undigested and contradictory advice. Among these new-comers were Lentulus Spinther, a man of wealth and birth, who had fought along with his father against Caesar, but had been freely pardoned; M. Favonius, a poor, empty, pompous creature, affecting the simplicity and sternness of Cato;<sup>1</sup> Cicero, blustering his applause, and rating the conspirators for not having given him the opportunity to drive a dagger into the man who had spared him over and over again when he deserved punishment, who had eaten recently at his table, and had laden him with courtesies and acts of kindnesses.

The real and would-be conspirators sat in feverish debate, irresolute, not knowing the temper of the people, without having in the least foreseen those consequences of their act which were patent enough to the shrewd sense of the vulgar. The people knew what the murder of Caesar involved—civil war, long possibly, disastrous and bloody certainly.

Below, in the forum, the people had begun to gather, and with confused cries to demand the presence of the magistrates. Two only appeared, Cinna and Dolabella. Cinna was Caesar's brother-in-law. He owed everything to Caesar, who had obtained his recall from exile and had restored to him his estates confiscated by Sulla. But he had married a daughter of Pompeius, and was sulky because Caesar did not give him enough, and was perhaps worked upon by his wife. He mounted the tribune, and threw off him the ensigns of his office of praetor that he owed to the favour of the dictator, and denounced the murdered man as a tyrant who had deserved his fate. The people would hear no more, they hooted him as a traitor and an apostate. Undeterred by his ill success, up leaped Dolabella, a very small man and inordinately conceited, a disreputable little wretch as well, a profligate and a spendthrift. Caesar had been most patronising to him, and had promised him the consulship for B.C. 44. He now ventured to usurp the insignia, and to pour forth invectives against his benefactor who had recently relieved him from pecuniary embarrassment. Later he had the ferocity to get hold of certain persons who went to the overturned altar of Caesar to offer there their sacrifices, and have them crucified or thrown over the Tarpeian rock. The people listened to him with ill-disguised contempt. Then M. Brutus and C. Cassius spoke, and exhorted the people to recover their liberties, and to recall Sextus, the only surviving son of Pompeius. This was a conjuring up of something more than the phantom of civil war. The multitude remained silent and ominously cold. The disappointed liberators made the best of their way back to the capitol, where the deliberations were still going on—and were still fruitless. The conspirators had agreed to kill the dictator, but had formed no plan as to what was to be done.

<sup>1</sup> Described along with L. Postumus as 'quasi magnae navis supervacua onera,' by the pseudo-Sallust. He was known also as 'Cato's ape.'

after that; and now that they had executed their deed, they looked each other in the face and asked what step was next to be taken. Cicero urged the convocation of the senate, but the senators were too timorous to appear when summoned. As for the people—it was clear from the ill success of Brutus, Dolabella, and Cinna that they were antagonistic. In spite of the protest of the great orator, it was resolved to negotiate with Antonius and Lepidus; in other words—with the army. The conspirators had struck, in Caesar, the darling of the soldiers, the head and crown of the military power, and in their fright they thought that they must now make an attempt to win over the favour of that power. Two circumstances combined to help them. Antonius was in command of no forces; Lepidus had troops under him. But Antonius was jealous of Lepidus, and Antonius was consul. If Lepidus took a decided course against the murderers, then, as Antonius saw clearly enough, he would become the darling of the army and the champion of the people. He therefore persuaded Lepidus, a weak man, to listen to the overtures of the liberators, and temporise.

The night was agitated. The friends of the conspirators ran about the town, hammering at the doors of the conscript fathers, urging them to assemble next day in the curia, and ratify the act that had been committed. But the delegates of the legions were also in Rome. Caesar had promised the grant of certain domains to them, and now they feared lest, with the death of the dictator, this understanding should not be fulfilled. They therefore also clamoured at the doors of the senators, to remind them that the soldiers must not be forgotten in their deliberations.

Day dawned, and the bewildered conscript-fathers took their way to the curia. Among them was Cinna, who had reconsidered his resignation of the praetorship, and had resumed the insignia.  
 16th March. He was received by the rabble and the soldiers with howls of rage, with stones and mud. He fled into a house. It was surrounded, and would have been burnt, had not Lepidus arrived with his soldiers and quelled the riot.

In the senate, Cicero rose to propose a general amnesty, and his proposition was carried, but with the proviso insisted on by Antonius, that none of the acts of Caesar should be questioned or cancelled. This was to absolve and condemn, in one breath, the murderers of Caesar. Fear and interest combined to effect its adoption, and a hollow peace was concluded. That evening Antonius received Cassius at his table, and Lepidus invited Brutus to his. Caesar was still lying unburied, with Calpurnia weeping over his wounds. Already a fraternisation was going on between his friends and his murderers. At this point we will turn to consider the earlier history and the character of Marcus Antonius.

Marcus Antonius was the eldest son of a father of the same name.



He was born in the year 83, and was therefore nineteen years younger than Caesar. His family was ancient, though plebeian. Being unable to claim a patrician origin they pretended to be descended from the god Hercules. But in spite of divine origin and protection, the house had become poor. Marcus Antonius the elder had been an unsuccessful man; he had been given command of a fleet in order to clear of pirates the coasts of the Mediterranean, and had been attacked by them, in place of attacking them, when in harbour at Crete, and had escaped from destruction by concluding with them an ignominious treaty. In derision he was called Antonius Creticus; and he did not venture after that to show his face in Rome. He had married Julia, daughter of Lucius Julius Caesar, consul in B.C. 90. After the death of Antonius, Julia married Lentulus, who was strangled for his complicity in the Catiline conspiracy. Lentulus had been turned out of the senate for his infamous life and manners. It was said of him that there was nothing too bad for him to say or do, and it was under such a stepfather that Antony's boyhood was passed.<sup>1</sup> The gentle mother was too weak to control the self-willed lad, and the example of and association with the dissolute youths of the capital, as well as his own vigorous and passionate nature, caused him to spend a wild and profligate adolescence. It was a long stride from a disorderly and impoverished early manhood to the position he was to attain, of lord of half the world, engaged in contest with the heirs of Caesar for the other half; and that he took this stride is evidence that there was more in him than was surmised by those who saw his wantonness and wastefulness in youth.

His first political association was with Clodius, and what broke up this association was an intrigue Antonius had with Fulvia, the wife of the demagogue, whom later, to his misfortune, he married.

Surrounded by, pestered by his creditors, he slipped away from Rome, and went to Greece. His education had been neglected, and he took advantage of this exile to remedy his deficiencies. But the stress of circumstances did not allow him for long to sit at the feet of the philosophers and rhetoricians of Athens. He was summoned to Syria by the proconsul Gabinus, and was appointed captain of his horse. As such he made the campaign in Egypt, which provided so much comment in Rome and led to the fall of Gabinus. In this campaign Antonius gave token of courage and military abilities, also of humanity and gentleness. He, however, soon saw that Gabinus was not the man under whom he could gain either laurels or wealth, and he left him, to return to Rome, where he was, literally, without a house to cover his head; and where, moreover, his old creditors awoke to persecute him again. His just instinct led him to Caesar, the first among all first-

<sup>1</sup> The name under the form of Marc Antony has been so familiarised with English people by Shakespeare, that it seems pedantic to employ the name in the Latin form. I may be excused if I use it in the future in the familiar form.

rate men, as Antony was the first among all second-rate men. Caesar was then in Gaul. Antony was twenty-nine, when he put himself unreservedly into the hands of the ablest man of the time; and it was due to the unbounded influence that Caesar exercised over him, that the headstrong, debauched youth developed powers and abilities that won him afterwards so great a place in the making of the destinies of the Roman world. With that clear insight into character that is possessed by born rulers, Caesar perceived in this youth something that deserved to be cultivated, and something that would make of Antony the most suitable man for carrying out his plans. Caesar was disappointed in many of his other lieutenants, but not in Antony.

The others served him in their own interest, overawed by his abilities; but Antony loved Caesar with the whole strength of his impulsive nature. He possessed two good qualities not corrupted by early disorders, enthusiasm for what was great, and readiness to submit to the man he respected and loved, and whose immeasurable superiority he frankly acknowledged. In a very short while Caesar found that he was able to rely on Antony with complete confidence. In 53 he was elected quaestor, and as quaestor returned to Gaul and served under Caesar for the next two years. His energy and intrepidity pointed him out to Caesar as eminently calculated to uphold his interests in the capital against the aristocratic party bent on obtaining his recall. He was accordingly sent back to Rome, and was chosen one of the tribunes of the people.

When, on the 1st January 49, the senate passed a decree depriving Caesar of his command, Antony and his colleague, Q. Cassius, interposed their veto, and as the senate set this at naught, and threatened their lives, they fled in disguise to Caesar. Antony remained behind in Italy, whilst Caesar crushed the Pompeians in Spain. All that while he governed for Caesar with great prudence. After the battle of Pharsalia, in which he commanded the left wing, Antony was again intrusted with the command of Italy, whilst Caesar was in Africa. Then his natural love of display and pleasure was given full rein. He divorced his wife Antonia, his first cousin, and lived publicly with an actress named Cytharis, and, boasting of his descent from Hercules, drove about in a car to which lions were harnessed.

When Pompeius' estate was put up to auction, Antony bought it, and supposed that Caesar, in recognition of his services, would not require him to pay the purchase-money. But Caesar was just as well as generous, and he insisted on payment. This offended Antony, and he was further annoyed when Caesar, on entering on his third dictatorship, appointed Lepidus to be his master of horse. Caesar was, actually, provoked at the dissoluteness and extravagance of Antony, and passed him over on that account.

When Caesar was forced again to return to Spain and Africa to

tread out the rekindled sparks of civil war, Antony remained behind at Rome like a sulky boy. But he loved and admired his master too sincerely to abide in this fit of bad humour, and after a year he overcame his annoyance, and himself held out his hand in reconciliation to Caesar—he, the younger by nineteen years, to the elder, the scholar to his teacher—and Caesar received him back with open arms. Thenceforth he remained firm in his adhesion to the new master of Rome. When the conspirators formed their plan of murdering the dictator, they resolved to assassinate Antony also, and it was only at the urgency of Brutus that they abandoned the project. As it was, they appointed one of their number to intercept Antony from entering the curia, by engaging him in conversation, whilst the blow was struck. They dreaded his herculean strength, as they were assured of his devotion.

And now, when the deed was done, Antony invited one of the murderers to sup with him.

Had he forgotten his master? Did he not know that the pierced body lay unburied and unavenged on its pallet in the regia? He had neither forgotten nor forgiven the act; but was without material force behind him, and he must dissemble till he had taken his measures.

Of that supper in the house of Antony, one curious incident is recorded. The consul knew that the guest and all the conspirators hated him, and hardly scrupled to kill him. Therefore, under his toga he wore a breastplate. During the meal he turned suddenly on Cassius and said, 'Well, have you a concealed dagger for me also?' 'Yes,' answered the murderer, rising on his elbow, 'one long enough to slay you too, if you venture to be a tyrant.'

There is a bust, supposed to be that of Antony, in the Vatican Museum. It is of admirable workmanship. Unhappily the evidence in favour of it is not all that could be desired. It is said to have been found in a cave concealed along with two others, Octavius and Lepidus.<sup>1</sup> It belongs to the period, and certainly has all the characteristics in the face that we should suppose. It is emphatically that of a man fond of his pleasures, kindly, not cruel, delighting in a joke, ready to laugh. There is no shiftiness, no low cunning in the face; on the contrary, there is great frankness; there is resolution, but not iron, rather a nature of iron mingled with clay. Of his medals there are plenty, and they tell much the same tale.

It is a little surprising to see Antony so disguising his feelings as to receive the murderer at his table. Had Cassius looked into his face as he ate and drank and laughed, he would have seen water in the eyes, the lips quivering; and he would have noticed that the hand with

<sup>1</sup> The evidence that a bust of Octavius was found with the two now in the Vatican is far from satisfactory. If they were found with Octavius, it is possible that they represent the other triumvirs, but only possible. We do not, however, really know for certain that they were so found.

which he raised his cup spilt the drops. There was no help for it. If Caesar's blood was to be avenged, then Antony knew there was no other man but himself to do it: he must exercise self-control till the occasion came, when he could let his heart reveal that it bled for his friend and master.

The whole after-life of Antony shows what an intensely affectionate nature his was. We think of him as a sensualist, but it was not sensual passion that held him to Cleopatra, and through her brought about his ruin and death; it was enthusiastic love of one who was far his superior in intellect and culture. He followed Cleopatra as he followed Caesar, with entire self-devotion. His was the nature that must cling to, and stay itself on one higher, stronger than himself. In spite of his round head, he was an idealist; and his character very attractive, because so full of generosity.

Antony knew well his danger. The men who had murdered Caesar had wished to murder him also. But he was consul; he had a brother, Caius, praetor; another, Lucius, tribune of the people. As consul he could unlock the doors of the public treasury, and at the requisite moment could lay his hands on the gold there accumulated by Caesar, and use it against Caesar's enemies.

Yet so completely did he control himself at this time, that a few days later Cicero wrote to his friend Atticus, 'Antonius, I imagine, thinks only of good dinners, and not in the least of doing harm.' So little could he read that heart; but then Cicero was himself a man without heart.

Antony never for a moment hesitated. With an energy and readiness that must excite our surprise and admiration, he had formed his resolution, whilst the irresolute murderers and their admirers were wavering from one course to another. And not his resolution only, but how it was to be carried out. What he aimed at was the empty chair of Caesar—that was the object of his personal ambition; but stronger, deeper than that was his determination to visit the murder of his master on every one of those who had had a hand in it. A wrong done to himself he might forgive—if not in the first fury of resentment—but such a wrong done against the man whom he had held to, and who had helped him against his baser self, that he never could forgive.

On the night after the murder he secured the papers of Caesar, which Calpurnia unreservedly placed in his hands; a few hours after that he had his hand on the gold in the temple of Ops. Now he had that by means of which Rome could be won—Rome, where all was venal, as Jugurtha had said with a laugh, as he turned and left it. He knew what the stupid murderers wanted, though they themselves did not know, or could not agree how to attain it, and he was resolved to frustrate all their efforts to reach what they desired. His shrewdness, his courage, his determination with which he laid hold of the



rudder of the drifting, pilotless vessel of the state before the republican conspirators had come to any understanding what to do, is most remarkable. Meanwhile these conspirators, who had armed for liberty, were arranging among themselves the division of the plunder. M. Brutus claimed and was allowed the government of Macedonia, Cassius was to have Syria, Trebonius was to pillage Asia Minor, Cimber to take Bithynia, and Decimus Brutus arrogated to himself Cisalpine Gaul. This distribution of provinces had been made by Caesar, who had been given power to appoint provincial governors. This it was which induced the conspirators to allow the acts of Caesar to be ratified.

In the senate, Piso, Caesar's father-in-law, asked for a public funeral. The request sent a shock of fear through the conspirators. Atticus, sitting by Cicero, whispered to him, 'Permit this—and all is lost.' Cassius vehemently opposed the proposal, but M. Brutus, still convinced, in spite of evidence to the contrary, that the general opinion of the populace favoured their deed, exerted his ascendancy over his colleagues to induce them to yield. They put into the hand of Antony the very lever he desired to effect their overthrow.

On a cold and windy day of March, the very day on which the funeral of Caesar took place, I went to the forum, and seated myself on the steps of the Julian Basilica, over against the place where the body of Caesar was burnt, looking at the platform whence Antony spoke to the people, and read Dean Merivale's account of the funeral. It is associated in my mind with that day, that scene; it is inimitable for the skill with which all notices of that event are gathered up and woven together, and I venture to quote it, almost in its entirety, as it would be presumptuous in me to attempt it again. But I differ from him in his view of the character and the feelings of Antony at the time. What he regards as consummate acting I believe to have been the outburst of genuine feeling; and I believe that it was the genuineness of the emotion of Antony that caused the great explosion of feeling among the people.

'The heralds proclaimed throughout the city the appointed place and hour of the obsequies. A funeral pyre was constructed in the Field of Mars, close to the spot where lay the ashes of Julia; for the laws forbade cremation within the walls. But the funeral oration was to be pronounced in the forum, and a temporary chapel, open on every side, modelled, it is said, after the temple of Venus the Ancestress, was erected before the rostra, and gorgeously gilded, for the reception of the body. The bier was a couch inlaid with ivory and strewn with vestments of gold and purple. At its head was suspended, in the fashion of a warrior's trophy, the toga in which the dictator had been slain, pierced through and through by the assassin's daggers. Calpurnius Piso walked at the head of the procession as chief mourner; the body was borne by the highest magistrates and most dignified

personages in the state ; the people were invited to make oblations for the pyre, of garments, arms, trinkets, and 'spices. So great was the concourse of the offerers, that the order in which they were appointed to present themselves could not be preserved, but every one was allowed to approach the spot by whatever route he chose from every quarter of the city.'

The spot was in front of the temple of Castor and Pollux—about which Bibulus, Caesar's old adversary, had made his joke ; divided from it by the Sacred Way, just below where the Tuscan street entered and crossed it. The little temple of Vesta was hard by, in which flickered the perennial fire, and the Puteal, the spot sacred to Jupiter, where once lightning had fallen. The house of the Vestal virgins was near the temple where the fire was maintained ; and near this also was the house that Caesar had occupied, the *regia*, the official residence of the chief pontiff, from which the body had been borne. There was at that time a great square in front of the temples of the Dioscuri and of Vesta, and it was in this square, paved with basaltic cobblestones, that the shrine was erected in which lay Caesar's body, and before which was raised a rostrum from which the consul was to pronounce his panegyric on the dead. Immediately behind the temples, and the house of the Vestals abruptly rose the Palatine, crowned with the palaces and the gardens of the nobles, then as now thick with clusters of sombre ilexes, and with here and there, rising above them, a funereal cypress and an umbrella pine. But the volcanic rock at that time of the year, on the steep slopes, was vivid with fennel growing rank, and the lilac anemone starred every slip of grass. So dense does the fennel grow there, that the piazza behind the temple of the Dioscuri is called after it.

'Dramatic shows formed, as usual, part of the ceremony. The murder of Agamemnon, and the requital of Ajax, who complained that in saving the Greeks he had saved his own assassins, furnished pungent allusions to the circumstances of the time, and moved the sensibilities of an inflammable populace.

'While the feelings of the citizens were thus melting with compassion, or glowing with resentment, Antonius came forward, as the first magistrate of the republic, to deliver the funeral eulogy to the mighty dead. Historians and poets have felt the intense interest of the position he at that moment occupied, and have vied with each other in delineating with the nicest touches the adroitness he displayed in guiding the passions of his audience. Suetonius asserts that he added few words of his own to the bare recital of the decrees of the senate, by which every honour had been heaped upon Caesar, and of the oath by which his destined assassins had bound themselves to his defence. But Cicero tells a different story. He speaks with bitter indignation of the praises, the commiseration, and the inflammatory appeals, which

Antony interwove with his address. With such contemporary authority before us we may believe that the speech reported by Appian is no rhetorical fiction, but a fair representation both of the manner and substance of the actual harangue. The most exquisite scene in the truest of all Shakespeare's historical delineations adds but little except the charm of verse and the vividness of dramatic action to the graphic painting of the original record.'

It seems to me that we lose the key to the whole story if we suppose that 'the famous speech was a consummate piece of dramatic art.' Had it been merely that, the people would hardly have been swept away into wild enthusiasm. It was the transparent sincerity of Antony, the genuineness of his grief, the crushing truth of his charges delivered with boiling indignation against the murderers, that stirred the people to their heart's core. Consider what Caesar had been to Antony—to Antony, deprived of a father at an early age, and left to a wild and undisciplined youth, without a real friend and without an adviser and guide. In Caesar's strong, calm, and earnest character he found that support which he had needed. He owed everything that was good in him to Caesar, who had fostered these germs. To Caesar he owed all his power, position, and wealth. He had been with Caesar, trusted by Caesar as had been no other man, since his twenty-ninth year. It was in the nature of Antony to love intensely, sincerely, and to idealise the object of his devotion. He had been forced by his position to curb his feelings, to swallow his grief—and now—at the funeral, when he had before him the people whom Caesar had loved, and struggled for, and who were sad at heart and frightened because their friend was struck down, the genuine emotions broke out in a lava burst of passionate eloquence; and as a lava torrent from a heart of fire, and not as a fictitious and theatrical exhibition, it proved irresistible. The face of Antony is not the face of an actor, it is that of a man of strong and honest feelings. In the battle of Actium his intense, self-forgetting passion for another whom he idealised carried him away also—that time to his destruction.

'The eloquence of Antony was less moving than the gestures which enforced it, and the accessory circumstances which he enlisted to plead on his behalf. He addressed himself to the eyes, no less than to the ears of his audience. He disclaimed the position of a funeral panegyrist: his friendship with the deceased might render his testimony suspected. He was indeed unworthy to praise Caesar; the voice of the people alone could pronounce his befitting eulogy. He produced the acts of the senate, and of the factions by whose hands Caesar had fallen, as the ground of his appeal, and the vouchers of his assertions. These he recited with a voice tremulous with grief, and a countenance struggling with emotions.

'He read the decrees which had within a twelvemonth heaped

honours on Caesar, and which declared his person inviolate, his authority supreme, and himself the chief and father of his country. Were these honours excessive or dangerous to the state? the senate had bestowed them: did they trench upon the attributes of the gods? the pontiffs had sanctioned them. And when he came to the words "consecrated, inviolable, father of his country" the orator pointed with irony to the bleeding and lifeless corpse, which neither laws nor oaths had shielded from outrage.'

He appealed, it may be observed, to the *moral* sense of his hearers. He showed them the senators cowardly, mean, cringing, taking the most solemn oaths and breaking them, claiming Caesar as their father and involving themselves therefore in the guilt of parricide, as they did of sacrilege, for they had proclaimed him divine. 'He passed on to recite the solemn oath by which the senate, the nobles, and among them the conspirators themselves, had devoted their hearts and hands to their hero's defence; and thereupon turning with glowing emotion towards the temple of Jupiter, conspicuous on the Capitol, he exclaimed: "And I, for my part, am prepared to maintain my vow to avenge the victim I could not save." The senators scowled and murmured. Antonius pretended to check his impetuosity, and address himself to soothing their alarm. After all, he said, "Let us bow to the stroke as mortal men. Let us bury the past in oblivion. Let us bear away these venerable remains to the abodes of the blessed, with due lamentations and deserved eulogies."

'With these words the consummate actor girt his robes closely around him, and, striding to the bier, with his head inclined before it, muttered a hymn to the body, as to the image of a god. In rapid verse or solemn modulated prose he chaunted the mighty deeds and glories of the deceased, the trophies he had won, the triumphs he had led, the riches he had poured into the treasury. "Thou, Caesar, alone wast never worsted in battle; thou alone hast avenged our defeats and wiped away our disgraces. By thee the insults of three hundred years stand requited. Before thee has fallen the hereditary foe who burnt the city of our fathers." The groans of men and the shrieks of women drowned the plaintive accents of the speaker. Suddenly, Antonius raised the mangled garment which hung over the body, and, waving it before the people, disclosed the rents of the murderers' daggers. The excitement of the populace now became uncontrollable. Religious enthusiasm fanned the flame of personal sympathy. They forbade the body to be carried to the Field of Mars for cremation. Chairs, benches, and tables were snatched from the adjacent buildings, a heap of fuel was raised before the door of the pontifical mansion in the forum, and the body, snatched by tumultuary hands, was cast upon it in a frenzy of excitement. Two young men, girt with swords and javelin in hand, were seen to apply the torch. Castor and Pollux, it was believed, had



descended more than once in human form to save the republic.' Their temple overlooked the whole scene. 'A divine sanction was thus given to the deed : every scruple was overruled ; and it was resolved to consume the hero's remains in the heart of his own city. The people continued to pile up branches and brushwood ; the musicians and players added their costly garments to the heap ; the veterans their arms, the matrons their ornaments ; even the trinkets which adorned the children's frocks were torn off, and offered in the blazing conflagration. Caesar was beloved by the Romans ; he was not less dear to the foreigners, who owed so much to his ascendancy, and had anticipated so much more. Gauls, Iberians, Africans, and Orientals, crowded in successive groups around the pyre, and gave vent to the sense of their common misfortune. Among these the Jews were eminently conspicuous. Caesar was the only Roman who had respected their feelings, and assured them of his sympathy.

'So violent a demonstration of grief could not stop here. Brands snatched from the flaming pile suggested the most obvious vengeance, and offered the readiest weapons. The crowds streamed away from the forum through the streets : the houses of Brutus and Cassius were the first objects of attack. The liberators had indeed fled, and the rioters were repulsed ; for in Rome every noble mansion formed a domestic fortress, and was proof against a sudden attack.'

Helvius Cinna, who had flattered and fawned on the dictator, but had since his murder been diligently spreading a detestable slander, that Caesar had meditated a law whereby every woman in Rome was to be placed at his disposal, was fallen on by the enraged people and torn to pieces. It was said that he was mistaken for the equally despicable praetor Cornelius Cinna, against whom, as a turncoat, the people were specially exasperated ; as it was, they summarily executed a man who as richly deserved lynching, and it is quite probable that they knew what they were about, and punished him for the lie he was spreading, and which they knew to be a lie.

Caius Casca affixed to his house-door a paper to notify that he was not the man who had murdered Caesar. The house of Bellienus, a freedman, notorious for his hostility to the dead dictator, was burnt to the ground. No further violence was committed, but the liberators had been shown in an unmistakable manner that they had nursed themselves in a fool's paradise, when they had supposed their act would be approved by the people of Rome.

Brutus and Cassius fled to Lanuvium, and there remained, afraid to venture their persons in the streets of the capital. Antony, who, it must be remembered, was but imperfectly educated, and had never cultivated the art of oratory, had been carried away by his feelings, and by the conviction which his words had stirred among the people. He felt he had gone too far, and sought to disarm the terrors of the senate.

A certain number of the knights, old publicans, bankers, and speculators, formed the idea of associating to furnish a fund, out of which the murderers of Caesar might enlist an army; but when Atticus, Cicero's correspondent and friend, refused to accept the presidency, the scheme fell to the ground; and Brutus and Cassius were left unsupported to learn the truth that a nation is not to be regenerated by assassination.

Meantime Antony was not idle, though disguising his ulterior purpose. The helpless senate was grateful that he sought its advice and obeyed it, whilst actually he dominated its councils. Cicero regarded him with hatred, because jealous of him. This distinguished orator fondly hoped that, now the dictator was removed, the old rotten and fallen constitution could be set up again, and galvanised into life by the power of his tongue. He saw in Antony a man who could sway the hearts of the people with unvarnished words, shaped by no oratorical rule, and accompanied by no studied postures and conventional flourishes of the arm. At this crisis Cicero thought that he himself ought to be the man in the state to whom all should look for guidance. He found, to his disgust, that Antony had risen to be arbiter of the fate of the republic. This he could not forget and forgive.

For some months Antony continued to strengthen his position and prepare for the great stroke he meditated, without over-alarms the senate. But the inherent inability of Antony to pursue his end vigorously till it was reached brought him to the edge of destruction.

The appearance of Octavius, the adopted son and heir of Caesar, upon the stage led to the strangest combinations and entanglements. Antony, hitherto the head of the Caesarian party, stood triumphant in opposition to the aristocracy, with sword drawn to sweep them aside so as to reach the murderers of Caesar, when the arrival of Octavius altered everything.

The party at the head of which stood Cicero at once turned to this 'boy,' with the object of using him as their tool against Antony, by dividing the Caesarian party. The young Octavius listened to their solicitation, seemed to yield, and not to perceive that this utterly unscrupulous party sought in him merely a weapon against Antony, with the intention of snapping and casting him away when they had done with him. Octavius mistrusted Antony: he saw plainly enough that he aimed at the dictatorship, and would brush him aside if he stood in his way. He had a difficult game to play; but he played it skilfully and successfully. Instead of taking part with Antony, whose honesty of purpose he wrongfully mistrusted, he coalesced with that party that applauded the murder of his kinsman and adopted father, and screened his murderers. But he united with it only so far as served his purpose to impress on Antony his importance as a factor in the great game. No sooner was Antony defeated by Decimus Brutus before Mutina (Modena) than he abruptly changed face, entered into confederacy with Antony, who had fallen

back on Lepidus with his legions, and the amazed and frightened senatorial party saw themselves confronted by three resolute men at the head of a large force, animated by one determination, to execute judgment on the murderers of Caesar, but otherwise without agreement. Lepidus had no ulterior views, but Antony and Octavius each aimed at supreme power. The new Triumvirate differed from the first, in that it was based on a statute that gave them almost absolute constitutional power over the whole Roman world for five years. The old republican constitution was thus practically swept away. The senate might, and did, legislate, but over its head were waved the swords of those who commanded the legions. The legislative body was, and had been since the days of Sulla and Marius, incapable of opposing the will of those to whom, out of their own body, they had given provinces, and with the provinces the command of the soldiery. Inevitably the men at the head of the legions would either combine to control the senate, or fight each other for the mastery, and for the sole power of ruling the legislative body.

The new Triumvirate was, like the first, a compromise that merely deferred the inevitable contest for supremacy between Octavius and Antony. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus, entered Rome, and held there their bloody tribunal. C. Julius Caesar had exercised clemency towards all his enemies, covert and proclaimed, and they had taken advantage of that clemency to drive their daggers into his unprotected body. Now judgment visited them, and visited them in pitiless fashion. What they had sown, that they reaped. They had taught their masters that no singleness of purpose, no sincere love of country, no redress of abuses, were valued by them a straw beside their own ambition to have a grasp on the provinces and the flush treasury; they had taught them that no gentleness and forbearance and generosity could touch these souls, steeped in the grossest sensuality and the meanest greed. If Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus chastised them with scorpions, they deserved it. Some pity is possibly provoked for Cicero, because he was an able man, and had grey hairs. But Cicero had ensured on himself the fate which met him, by his Philippics against Antony, in which he had transgressed every rule of decency, justice, and good taste. Such brutal insults could only be wiped out with blood. He had pursued and calumniated Antony in a manner unparalleled since the world began. Antony would have been a man of superhuman virtue to have spared him. Antony was in a fever of resentment against the party that had put forward Octavius against him, and stung to madness by the invectives heaped upon him. The proscription was due mainly to him. Seneca indeed says that Octavius 'dictated the names of the proscribed whilst at table.' But against this we may set the authority of Dio Cassius, who exonerates Octavius of having had an active part in the proscription.

The murderers and the heads of the Republican army had fled. They had secured the support of Sextus Pompeius, whose fleet ruled the sea, and was now in the East. To Antony fell the obligation to pursue and chastise them.

The great and fatal defect in the character of Antony was his inability to maintain the high level of achievement which he reached by spasmodic efforts. This was due in a large measure to faults in education. He had never been taught self-control; and the laxity of his youth pursued him through life and robbed him of the fruit of his successes. Caesar trusted him and used him, and, sustained by his love and veneration for Caesar, Antony did well, and deserved the confidence reposed in him. But when the eye of Caesar was off him, and he was left in sole command in Italy, he lapsed into self-indulgence and follies worthy only of a loose boy. Caesar let him understand his displeasure, and Antony accepted the reproof. On Caesar's death, in a position of unparalleled difficulty, Antony developed a remarkable political ability, quite unexpected in him, used self-constraint, tact, and shrewdness, that were deserving of praise; but no sooner had he got the keys of the position in his hands than he became reckless, and allowed a mere boy of eighteen to snatch them from him. It was the same when in Egypt. Governor of Asia, he was in a position of extraordinary power, and yet he wantonly threw away his chances, caring only for dalliance with Cleopatra. If he assumed a mask, he was impatient to throw it off. If he exerted himself during one hour, he asked for two in which to forget his troubles and relax his nerves; a man of fits and starts, of good and evil; a man whose career was ruined by his early self-indulgence and lack of steady discipline. He had a kindly heart and some generosity, but no knowledge of himself, no prudence, no moderation; great abilities, but not the perseverance which could give him the fruits of what he won with his abilities, military and political.

Beside Antony we have Lepidus. Drumann has drawn his picture with extravagant touches; he sketches Lepidus as a rogue and a fool. He was neither: he was a man of the second class of abilities, and low down in that class. He had no great ambition. He loved his country and was willing, nay, eager, to do his utmost, at the sacrifice of his own chances, to spare Rome unnecessary bloodshed. After the death of Caesar he alone was present in the neighbourhood, at the head of troops, and he might at once have invested himself with dictatorial power, and proceeded to revenge the murder. The senate feared him, Antony saw the danger, and both approached him. Lepidus listened to their words, and desisted from taking any steps to provoke civil war. Indeed, he withdrew with his legions into Transalpine Gaul, and when the sword was drawn in Italy he declined to take part with either Antony or Decimus Brutus and Octavius—whose position of fraternisation with the party that had upheld the assassins, he could not understand. But when



Antony and Octavius united and declared their resolve to bring the murderers to account, then all hesitation in Lepidus ceased, and he joined with them. He was present at the conference in which the proscription lists were drawn up, and it is recorded against him that he delivered over his own brother to the murderers. This is inaccurate. His brother Paullus was one of the aristocratic party, and had joined in declaring him an enemy of the State, and therefore to be put to death, openly or by assassination. Lepidus did have his brother's name inscribed among those on the proscription list, but when he sent soldiers after his brother it was with orders to let him escape, and Paullus did escape to Miletus, and speedily received his full pardon.



FIG. 26.—M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS. Gold Medal of the Musidian gens, enlarged.

In the division of the provinces among the triumvirs, Lepidus obtained Spain and Narbonese Gaul, and he surrendered seven out of his ten legions to Antony and Octavius without complaint. His colleagues gave him but a secondary part to play, and he was content. He had no ambition for anything higher. In B.C. 42, Lepidus was consul. His colleagues had no further need for him, he was too poor a creature to match with them, and after the battle of Philippi, at the close of this year, under pretext that he was in treasonable correspondence with Sextus Pompeius, they deprived him of his provinces. It was, however, arranged that should the charge prove unfounded, he should be given Africa. The triumvirs were unable to establish anything against Lepidus, and in B.C. 40 he was allowed to take possession of the province of Africa, which he retained for six years, and allowed himself to drop out of all influence and power in Rome. It was only when he saw that it was the resolve of Octavius to deprive him of every shred of power that he took up arms and attempted to make himself master of Sicily.

The beautiful bust in the Vatican, which is said to have been found along with one of Octavius and another supposed to be Antony, is catalogued as Lepidus. It may be so. It does not, however, well agree with the gems and coins. It represents a man, gentlemanlike, and the

Lepidi were gentlemen of the bluest blood, without strength of character, easily swayed, and without a tinge of cruelty. If he did a cruel thing it was in self-protection. There is a little dulness about the brow and eyes, as though he were a man who did not see his way clearly before him, but strove to do what was right as far as he saw his way.<sup>1</sup> The brow is remarkably narrow, and the mouth weak, the lower lip and chin drawn back. In the bust he is bearded. He does not so appear on either of the gems bearing his head.

## II.—ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

It is not my purpose to write of the events of Roman history that ensued on the setting up of the Triumvirate to the fall of Antony; to tell how Brutus and Cassius were defeated and slain in the battle of Philippi, nor of the progress of the infatuation of Antony for Cleopatra.



FIG. 27.—CLEOPATRA. Bronze Medal of Alexandria, enlarged.

Antony, to his misfortune, had taken to wife Fulvia, the widow of Clodius, a masculine, resentful, strong-willed woman, 'in whom,' says Velleius Paterculus, 'there was nothing feminine but her body.' Antony was warmly attached to his two sons, born to him by her, but he could not love the mother, who surpassed him in passion and ambition, and her savage cruelty and persistent vindictiveness were the reverse of his disposition. Her stronger intellect and will dominated his, which was weak in those points where hers was strong. They stood to each other much in the relation of Macbeth to Lady Macbeth. She hated and feared the 'boy' Octavius, and would have driven her husband on to a death-grapple with him, before he had

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Lepidus :—

1. Coin of Antonian gens, struck at Ephesus; Bronze; Moretti, *Thesaur. Num. Famil. Roman.* p. 20, No. 7.

2. The coins, gold and silver, with his head along with those of Augustus or Antonius, are ill struck. That of the Musidian gens engraved above.

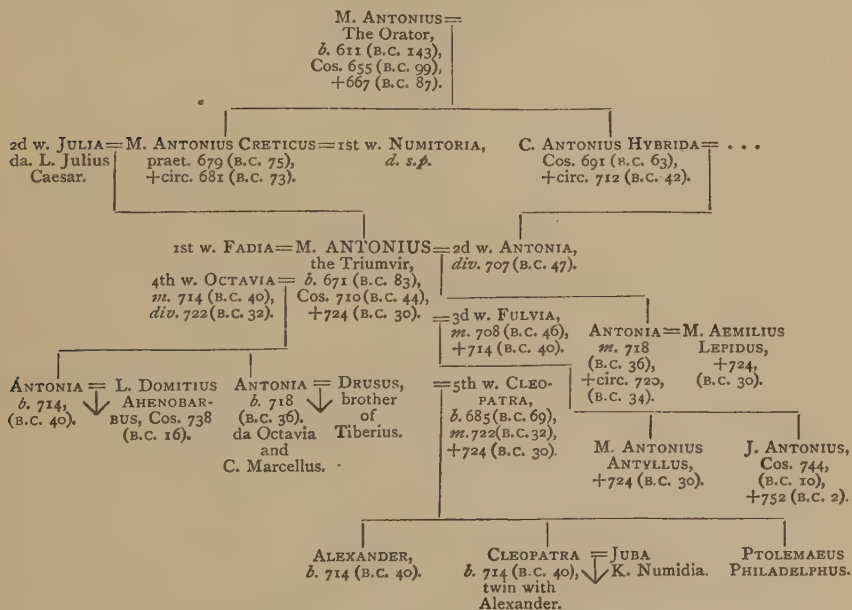
3. Gem, black jasper; King's Gems, Plate ii. 18.

4. Gem, King, Pl. xlviii. 6.

5. Bust in Vatican, found at the Tor Sapienza, Br. Nuovo, No. 106; doubtful.

6. Bust in Torlonia Gallery, found at Civitavecchia; Greek marble, wears chlamys, No. 510, doubtful.

grown strong. Antony sought in vain to soften her rugged nature; and Plutarch has preserved to us one incident, 'out of many others of like nature,' of their relation to each other, and of the contrast of their characters. Once Antony disguised himself as a slave, and thus brought her a written bulletin recording his death. Without opening the letter, she cried out passionately, 'Does Antony live?' whereupon he caught her in his arms. She did love him, in her tigerish fashion; she had no appreciation of his fun and jokes, still less of his forbearance and amiability, which she scorned as weaknesses. Indeed, all his better qualities, which she ought, as a wife, to have fostered, she trampled under foot with contempt. 'Her whole aim was,' says Plutarch, 'to rule a ruler, and be commandress of a commander.' Her rancour and cruelty knew no bounds, and many of the bloody deeds done in the time of the proscription were due to her instigation and furtherance, Antony being too weak to oppose her. The story is well known how when Cicero was slain, she had the head brought to her and drove her bodkin through the tongue that had maligned her and her husband. 'It was to Fulvia,' says Plutarch, 'that Cleopatra owed her triumph, for the former had educated Antony into submission to female authority. He had gone through such a schooling to her as made him perfectly tractable when he came into the hands of the Egyptian queen.'



Antony was the idol of soldiers; his frankness, his good-nature, his readiness to share all hardships with them, endeared him to them.

His soldiers remained faithful to him after the defeat at Mutina, and through his terrible flight over the Alps, where he did drink

‘The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle  
Which beasts would cough at,’

and ate the bark of trees and the roots of plants. Later, in the Parthian war, when through his own fault his army was brought, after terrible losses, to the verge of destruction, he was able to reduce the despairing and mutinous wreck of a host to submission by a brief speech. Then the soldiers shouted out their readiness to submit to any punishment he chose to inflict on them—decimation, if he willed it; Antony, overcome by emotion, raised his hands to heaven, and prayed the gods, if they sought



FIG. 28.—M. ANTONIUS. Silver Medal of Alexandria, enlarged.

to mete out to him misfortune after the good fortune which they had given him in former times, to let all their punishment fall on his head, but to spare his host, and carry them to victory. It was like the prayer of David before the destroying angel. Misfortune always brought out the best qualities of Antony. ‘In necessity and adversity,’ says Plutarch, and all witnesses of antiquity agree with him, ‘he surpassed himself, and was nearest to perfection.’ He had sincere pity for his wounded soldiers. ‘He visited all,’ says Plutarch, ‘and consoled them with tears of real grief and affection. The wounded soldiers, embracing the hand of their general, entreated him not to attend to their sufferings, but to his own health and repose. “Whilst our general is safe,” they said, “all is well.” There was not a man in the army, from the first officer to the meanest soldier, who would not have preferred the favour of Antony to his own life and safety.’

But when all went smooth with Antony he degenerated into an idler, neglectful of his duties, forgetful of his dignity. ‘Whilst Caesar (Octavius) was harassed with seditions at Rome, Antony in Greece abandoned himself once more to all the dissipations of his former life. Harpers, pipers, dancers, the whole corps of the Asiatic drama, who



far outdid in buffoonery the poor wretches of Italy,—these were the people of the court, the folk who carried all before them. Antony deprived many noble families (in Greece) of their fortunes, and bestowed them on sycophants and parasites. He gave to his minions the estates of persons he was told were dead, but who were actually alive. He gave his cook the property of a Magnesian citizen for having cooked one supper to his taste: but when he laid a double impost upon Asia, and the agent for the people represented to him that if he doubled the taxes he ought also to double the seasons, and supply the people with two summers and two winters,—he was sensibly touched. He was ignorant of many things transacted under his authority; not that he was indolent, but that he was unsuspecting. He had simplicity in his nature, and was void of penetration. When he found that wrongs had been done, he expressed the utmost concern. He was prodigal in his rewards and vigorous in his punishments; but exceeded in the former rather than in the latter. The rude raillery of his talk carried its own remedy with it, for he was perfectly ready to take as much as he gave, all in good humour. But this had a bad effect on his affairs. He fancied that those with whom he was on familiar terms in conversation could not be insincere in business transactions; not understanding that his flatterers used their freedom as a sort of poignant sauce, and that by taking liberties with him at table, they thought to make him suppose, when they attended to his requirements in matters of business, it arose not out of complaisance, but out of deference to his superior judgment.'

Seneca is hardly right when he says, lamenting Antony's love of drink and passion for Cleopatra, that he was a great man of high order of intellect, and then exclaims, 'O what he might have won had he willed it!' Antony's connection with Caesar shows that he was capable of noble things, and had Caesar lived he would have done better. He was calculated to play a second part only under a strong head. His worst enemy, Cicero, could not accuse him of avarice; he said, 'I cannot possibly admit that you have been bribed, for never have I seen in you a trace of sordid greed or baseness.' One anecdote of his indifference to money is told of him by Plutarch; the same however is told of Nero by Dio Cassius. He had once ordered his treasurer to pay out a million sesterces as a present to a friend. The treasurer, to show him what a great sum this was, spread the gold pieces upon the table. 'Is that all?' said Antony; 'double the amount.'

When he came to Egypt he fell at once into the power of Cleopatra. That was in B.C. 41, when Cleopatra was aged twenty-eight, and to her he maintained his devotion to the end, to B.C. 30, when she was thirty-nine years old. Now it seems to me impossible to attribute this fascination to mere passion in Antony for the beauty of the great queen. A woman of thirty under an African sun is a hag. Her beauty is gone after she is twenty; and the medals struck by Antony with his portrait on

them along with that of Cleopatra, do not represent her as other than an old woman, of marked features, by no means beautiful.

With Cleopatra there were other and more enduring charms than personal beauty of feature. Plutarch tells us that 'her beauty was neither astonishing nor unique; but it derived a force from her wit, and the fascination of her manner, which was absolutely irresistible. Her voice was delightfully melodious, and had the same variety of modulation that has an instrument of many strings. She spoke many languages, and there were but few of the foreign ambassadors whom she answered by an interpreter.' That she was a far-seeing woman, who had formed a well-defined plan, beneficial to her country, there can be no doubt. She sought first by means of Caesar, and then of Antony, to save Egypt from sinking into the position of a province to be sucked dry by rapacious proconsuls, and to elevate Alexandria, if possible, to be the rival of Rome. The Roman people saw her plan, feared and hated her accordingly, and what we know of Cleopatra is almost entirely due to the pens steeped in venom of her deadly enemies.<sup>1</sup>

Cleopatra saw, or thought she saw, that Rome could not hold the vast empire together, disorganised and torn to pieces at the centre by contending factions, and her plan was either that Alexandria should be the seat of an empire under personal government, or, if this was impossible, that Alexandria should be the capital of the East, and Rome of the West,—Antony as sovereign over the Orient, and Octavius over the West. She foresaw, in fact, what was the eventual solution of a great difficulty, when it was too late to recover lost ground, and make of each empire a strongly concentrated and vigorous entity.

The Egyptian queen humoured Antony's boyish love of frolic, which he preserved till he was over fifty, but she did not, like Antony, allow amusement to cloud her mind and obscure her true purpose.

'Whether Antony were gay or grave,' says Plutarch, 'Cleopatra was always with him. She gamed, drank, hunted, reviewed the troops with him. In his night rambles, when he was reconnoitring the doors and

<sup>1</sup> See for the rehabilitation of this remarkable woman, A. Stahr, *Cleopatra*; Berlin, 2nd ed. 1879. Dean Merivale also does some justice to her abilities.

Portraits of Cleopatra :—

1. Medals. A four-drachma piece struck in Asia Minor about B.C. 33; on one side the profile of Cleopatra, on the other that of Antony.

2. Two copper coins of circ. 40.

3. An engraved sardius, Antony and Cleopatra: *Gorii Thesaur.* i. 172.

4. A representation of Cleopatra and Caesarion in the temple of Denderah, erected by her to Hathor. Rossellini, *Monumente dell'Egitto*; Pisa, 1833, Parte Prima, T. ii. Plate xxii. fig. 82.

5. Another in the same: do., Plate xxiii. figs. 26 and 27.

6. Again another in same: do., Plate xxiii. fig. 83.

7. Again another, colossal, at Thebes: do. i. 4, p. 370-1.

None of the statues of Cleopatra were destroyed at Alexandria, whereas those of Antony were overthrown. Octavius spared them for a thousand talents, offered him by Archibius, a friend of the unfortunate queen.

windows of the citizens, and cutting jokes with them, she attended him, dressed as a servant. From these expeditions he often returned somewhat battered in person and character. Some of the Alexandrians were huffed at these whimsical pranks, others enjoyed them, and said that Antony played his comic parts in Alexandria and reserved his tragic parts for Rome,—which was well.'



FIG. 29.—CLEOPATRA. Silver Medal of Alexandria, enlarged.

Then Plutarch tells the characteristic story of his fishing in the Nile. He was wont to go out fishing with a line, and take Cleopatra with him, but as he caught nothing for several days, he was put out of countenance and got a slave to dive and fasten a fish on to his hook. Cleopatra was deceived at first, but presently detected the trick, and sent a slave of her own under water to fasten a pickled sardine to Antony's hook. When he fished this up in triumph, he was greeted with a burst of laughter. 'There, go now, general,' said the queen, 'and take with you the lesson to leave fishing to the petty Nile princes. Your game is higher,—cities, kings, and provinces.'

Fulvia died in B.C. 40, and then Octavius made an effort to reclaim Antony and attach him to himself, by furthering a marriage between him and his sister Octavia. It was thought that if any woman could frustrate the wiles of Cleopatra, and withdraw the infatuated Antony from the sphere of her fascination, it would be the modest and discreet Octavia. But, unfortunately, Octavia was not beautiful, nor, perhaps, very clever. We have what is, probably, an authentic bust of her in the Louvre that agrees in profile with the medal on which she is represented with Antony. It is of porphyry, and is in perfect preservation, retaining its polish. The face is that of a good, sensible, homespun woman, heavy in feature and no doubt dull of eye. The beauty of the family was concentrated in Octavius. The marriage was universally desired, and this Antony was made to understand, and with his usual good humour, though not without a struggle, he yielded to the general demand.

Sextus Pompeius, only remaining son of the great Pompeius, had been living as a freebooter, sweeping the seas with his fleet, and ravaging

the shores of the Mediterranean. He had secured Sicily, B.C. 43; and an attempt was now made to come to terms with him, as he had shown kindness to the mother and the wife of Antony, when they were forced to fly from Rome. Conditions having been agreed upon, it was arranged that the marriage of Antony to Octavia should be the pledge of a general shaking of hands and sheathing of swords. A meeting was to take place with Pompeius at Misenum in B.C. 39, and there Pompeius arrived with his fleet, whilst Antony and Octavius came to the spot by land. Festivities were arranged, and each party invited the other to supper. When it fell to the lot of Pompeius to give the first entertainment, Antony asked him where they were to sup. 'There,' said Sextus, pointing to his admiral's galley, 'that is the only mansion left to Pompeius,'—a reminder to Antony that when the estates of Pompeius Magnus had been sequestered, he had bought his house on the Palatine. During the banquet many sharp things were said about Antony's intimacy with Cleopatra; but Antony, though he may have winced, was able to retort on his host. During supper, Menas, the captain of the galley, came behind Pompeius and whispered in his ear a request that he might cut the cable, when Sextus would be made master of the persons of Octavius and Antony, and could put them to death and become master of the Roman empire. But Pompeius, after a moment's deliberation, declined the offer, as against his oath and an abuse of hospitality. The entertainment was returned, and after supper the new allies amused themselves with games of chance, and with cock and quail fights. Antony lost in all games of dice, and his cock and quail were defeated by the birds of Octavius. He was disturbed at this, and consulted an Egyptian soothsayer, who warned him, 'Your genius is afraid of the genius of that young man, and before him shrinks away.'

Antony went to Greece with his new wife, who was in all points the reverse of Fulvia, for she was amiable, gentle, and forbearing. Antony was the man to appreciate, and he won by good qualities in a woman, and for a while he was certainly attached to her. The writers of antiquity are unanimous in their praise of this woman.<sup>1</sup> As a wife, she was true to her husband, she was an admirable mother, forgiving readily the most cruel wrongs, and repaying them with devotion and good deeds; compassionate to those in trouble, and always ready with her assistance. She had lived in happy marriage with her first husband, C. Marcellus, and it was shortly after his death that for political reasons she was united with the very unsuitable partner, Antony. Octavia stands out against the dark background of these evil days as a figure of light. She was one of the few women of the high nobility of that time who always kept in eye the welfare of her country, and sacrificed to it her own interests and ambitions; and, in the midst of civil

<sup>1</sup> *χρήμα θαυμάσιον γυναικός*, Plut. *Ant.* 31.



war, was ever prepared to put forth her hand to effect a reconciliation of the parties opposed. At the time of the Proscription she did everything in her power to stay her brother Octavius from extending the list, and in numerous cases intervened between the victims and their murderers to save them. When, in the cause of peace, Octavius desired that she should marry Antony, only a few months after the death of Marcellus, and whilst she was expecting her confinement, she yielded her private feelings to the public necessity; for the welfare of her fatherland, and peace in the empire, were to her the highest objects for which she could strive.

Soon after her marriage with Antony she bore a daughter, who, although not his child, was called Antonia. Between two and three years later she bore Antony a daughter, who was given the same name, a woman whom we shall meet again as the mother of Germanicus and of Claudius.<sup>1</sup>

She remained a year with her husband in Greece till the spring of 36, and then he undertook his disastrous campaign against the Parthians. Hardly had he parted with Octavia than he sent a messenger to Cleopatra to meet him in Lycaonia, and the Egyptian queen, who had chafed at her separation, and at the bonds in which Antony was held by his worthy but somewhat commonplace wife, readily joined him. The old fascination fell on him, and he was mastered for the rest of his life.

Now it was that the nobility of the admirable woman Octavia shone out with its purest lustre. Cruelly wronged and neglected though she was, she condoned Antony's intrigue with Cleopatra, and when he was in distress, after the disasters in Armenia, brought him treasures and troops, collected mainly by her exertions, or accorded him by Octavius at her entreaty. And not only was she a good wife, but she was a good stepmother. She cared for, tenderly and conscientiously, those children of Antony by Fulvia, whom he had forgotten and neglected, as he forgot and neglected her.

For eight years after the marriage of Antony and Octavia the Triumvirate was formally maintained, the masters of military power dividing the empire between them. But Antony and Octavius had no community of interest or purpose, and Antony by his own folly alienated the affections of the Roman people, and lost his hold over the military. He wantonly threw all supremacy at the seat of government into the hands of Octavius. He was falling more and more completely into the toils of the able and ambitious queen, whose object was,

1 Portraits of Octavia :—

1. Medal of the date A.D. 21, with on one side the head of Tiberius, on the other those of Augustus and Octavia, facing each other : Mongez, *Icon. Rom.* Pl. xix. 9.

2. Several medals of M. Antonius : Cohen, i. p. 52.

3. A Sicilian bronze : Cohen, i. p. 52.

4. A gold medal of B.C. 36 : Cohen, i. p. 52.

5. A very fine gold medal recently discovered : Bernoulli, *Taf.* xxxii. p. 14.

with his assistance, to split up the empire and make of Alexandria the capital of a great Eastern Empire, independent of Rome. It became obvious that Rome must either relinquish her hold on the east, or fight for it.



FIG. 30.—OCTAVIA. Porphyry Bust in the Louvre.

In 32 war broke out between Octavius and Antony, and when it was proclaimed by the former, Antony retaliated by repudiating Octavia, whom he had not seen for four years.

The rest of the story must be told shortly.

Early in the season of 31 Antony repaired to Epirus to collect an army and a fleet, wherewith to cross into Italy. At first he showed some tokens of his old military vigour and resolution; this animated his soldiers with the enthusiasm for their general which he never failed to inspire. But his chief officers, won by the money of Octavius, or disgusted at his surrender to Cleopatra, mistrusting his purposes, moreover, which had been divulged at Rome by a treacherous exposure of his will, that showed that his ambition was to die at Alexandria, not at

Rome—these officers deserted him in such numbers that he knew not whom to trust, and his resolution broke down under disappointment. All his old soldierly qualities failed him; and finally, in council with Cleopatra and her Egyptian advisers, he resolved to abandon his army and escape with the fleet to Alexandria. But contrary winds set in and continued blowing for four days. Neither could Antony escape, nor could Octavius put to sea against him. However, on September 2d the wind fell, and at once the light Liburnian galleys of Octavius rushed over the blue waters against the clumsy vessels of Antony's fleet, half-manned with field-labourers, muleteers, and travellers pressed into the service. These unwieldy hulks formed a half-moon, behind which lay the light Egyptian navy, fifty or sixty vessels in all.

The place where the navy of Antony had been gathering was that little inland sea, the Ambracian Gulf, now the Gulf of Arta. Just within the channel that communicates with the sea is a bay, to the south, and in this lay Antony's fleet. Opposite him was a low tongue of land, on which Octavius Caesar had his camp, and whence he had watched him for some days.

When the Caesarian galleys approached, stones were hurled against them from the great vessels of the enemy, and beams were thrust forth from their sides to repel their assault.

‘But the Caesarian galleys came to the attack with agile and dexterous manoeuvres. Their well-trained rowers bore up and backed alternately, or swept away the banks of the enemy's oars under cover of a shower of arrows. They scudded round and round the unwieldy masses in parties of three to four each, distracting the attention of the defenders, and protecting each other in turns from grappling and boarding. The combat was animated, but indecisive; the Liburnians, the light cavalry of the seas, crippled but could not destroy the steadfast phalanxes of Antonius. But while his unmanageable barges rolled lazily on the water, incapable of attacking, and scarcely repelling the desultory attacks of their pigmy assailants, suddenly the wind shifted. The breeze was favourable for flight. Cleopatra, whose galley was anchored in the seas, hoisted the purple sails on her gilded deck, and threaded rapidly the maze of combatants, followed by the Egyptian squadron of sixty barks. This movement, unexpected to the last by either party, was ascribed to a woman's cowardice; but from what had passed in council, there can be no doubt that it was previously concerted. When Antonius himself, observing the appointed signal, leaped into a five oared galley, and followed swiftly in her wake, the rage and shame of his adherents filled them with desperation. Many tore down the turrets from the decks and threw them into the sea, to lighten their vessels for flight. Others only nerved themselves for a more furious struggle; while the Caesarians, exulting in the prospect of a speedy triumph, rashly attempted to board, and met many severe repulses. Shattered

and disabled as these floating masses were, it was impossible to sink or disarm them until fire was resorted to. Octavius sent to the camp for the requisite materials; torches and burning javelins were hurled into them from a distance, piles of combustibles were drifted against them; one by one they took fire, and from want of implements at hand it was impossible to extinguish the rising conflagration. One by one they burnt down to the water's edge and sank slowly into the abyss; the Caesarians attempted in vain to save them, not so much from humanity, as for the hope of booty; but men and treasures went together to the bottom, and all the fleets of Asia were buried in the wilderness of waters.<sup>1</sup>

A few days after, when the shameful flight of Antony was made known to his army, all his legions went over to the conqueror. Such was the battle of Actium. When the sun set on that 2d of September in the glittering Western sea, its rays kindled smoking wrecks and floating corpses. Octavius was thenceforth sole master of the world, and history reckons the beginning of the restored monarchy of his uncle from this evening. For eleven months after this battle Antony and Cleopatra were in Egypt, unmolested. Octavius returned to Italy for the winter, and there remained till the midsummer of B.C. 30, before he set forth to reap the fruits of his great victory. During these months Antony, full of shame and despair, remained shut up in the isle of Pharos, whilst Cleopatra formed wild and impossible schemes of resistance or flight. In July, Octavius arrived, and Cleopatra, believing that resistance was hopeless, resolved to give up her fleet to the conqueror. The historians combine to represent the conduct of Cleopatra in the most odious light, as though she were meditating to save herself by abandoning Antony. But it is not necessary to believe this. Resistance was hopeless; more blood might flow, but no success would be gained. Cleopatra saw this, and acted on it. By abandoning the attempt to resist, she hoped to obtain mild terms for herself and her people, and for Antony. But the latter was reckless now when resistance was useless, as he had been timorous when it was possible. He insisted on fighting Octavius; and for the purpose led his infantry out of Alexandria and posted them on rising ground, whence he could see the Egyptian fleet advance towards the enemy. But no sooner did the fleets meet than they hailed each other with their oars in friendly fashion, and the fleet of Cleopatra, uniting with that of Octavius, proceeded with it towards the city. At the same time Antony's cavalry deserted in a body and surrendered to the enemy.

His infantry gave way at the first shock, and Antony fled back to Alexandria, exclaiming bitterly that Cleopatra had betrayed him to those with whom he was fighting for her sake. All hope was now gone. Cleopatra fled to a mausoleum that she had constructed to receive her

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *History of the Romans*, iii. pp. 323-4.



body after death, which was not approachable by a door, but reached by a window, and sent messengers to ask the mercy of the victor. So also did Antony; he desired nothing save life and a private station. Octavius refused his request. That night, in the universal stillness that reigned throughout the city, a silence deepened by the awful thought of what would ensue on the morrow, a sudden sound of wild and mysterious music was heard to pass through the streets, and go out at the gate which led to the enemy's camp. Some said it was the god Dionysos, whom Antony had sought to imitate, and whose votary he had been, leaving the luckless man.

News—the gossip of the town—reached Antony next day that Cleopatra had died by her own hand. 'I am not sorry,' said he, 'that thou art gone before; I shall soon be with thee.' Then he caught up a sword and mortally wounded himself. Just then, Cleopatra's secretary arrived with a request from her that he would come to her to the mausoleum. This revived him, and he bade his servants bear him thither in their arms. From a window above, the queen and her women let down a rope, to which he caused his litter to be attached, and he was thus conveyed into the upper chamber. His strength just sufficed for this final interview, and in a few moments he expired in the arms of the woman 'for whom he had sacrificed his fame, his fortunes, and his life.'

The rest of the story is soon told—how Cleopatra, when she found that Octavius was reserving her to grace his triumph, perished also by her own hand, though *how* is not known. Popular report said by the poison of an asp, which she vexed with the point of a golden spindle till it darted at her and bit her arm. Another report was that she had taken a virulent poison concealed in a bodkin in her hair. When the doors of the mausoleum were broken open Cleopatra was found lying on her golden bed in royal apparel, dead; and of her two women servants, one was expiring at her feet. The other, Charmion, was failing, and endeavouring to set right the crown on the head of her mistress.

'What is this we see?' exclaimed one of those who burst in. 'Is this well done?'

'Right well,' answered Charmion, 'and worthily of the descendant of kings.' Then she also sank on the ground and died.

A word or two must be added on the personal appearance of Antony.

Plutarch says: 'Along with his brilliant gifts, Antony had nobility of race and dignity of carriage. The well-grown beard, the broad brow, the hawk-nose, combined to give him what we so admire in the busts of Hercules, as represented by painters and sculptors.' This vigorous and well-developed physique (*λαμπρότης τῆς ὥρας*) must have been lost through indulgence, and he became fat and coarse. Caesar had already noticed this when he contrasted the 'fat and sleek' Antony and

Dolabella with the 'lean and hungry' Brutus and Cassius. Dio puts into Cicero's mouth a rebuke of Antony for exhibiting his bloated and coarse figure in the public squares. In the second Philippic Cicero refers to the gigantic size of Antony.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Marcus Antonius :—

Numerous coins, the first of the date B.C. 43, by the Master of the Mint, Sepullius Macer, who also struck medals with the bust of Caesar. On this Antony is represented as augur and bearded, a token of sorrow for the death of Caesar. Another medal of the same year represents him as still bearded. After that always shaven.

*Busts :—*

1. That in the Vatican, Braccio nuovo, No. 96A. Bernoulli throws some doubt on the account that it was found along with those of Octavius and Lepidus in a grotto at the Tor Sapienza about 1830.

2. Bust attributed to Antony in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence : nose and chin restored. The brow too lofty for M. Antonius, nor is the hair as full as on the medals, nor the face as full of flesh.

3. Bust from the Campana collection at St. Petersburg. A Campana forgery in all probability.

4. Bust at Munich, possibly Antony. The same may be said for 5, one in the Torlonia Gallery.

*Gems :—*

1. A Cornelian in the British Museum.

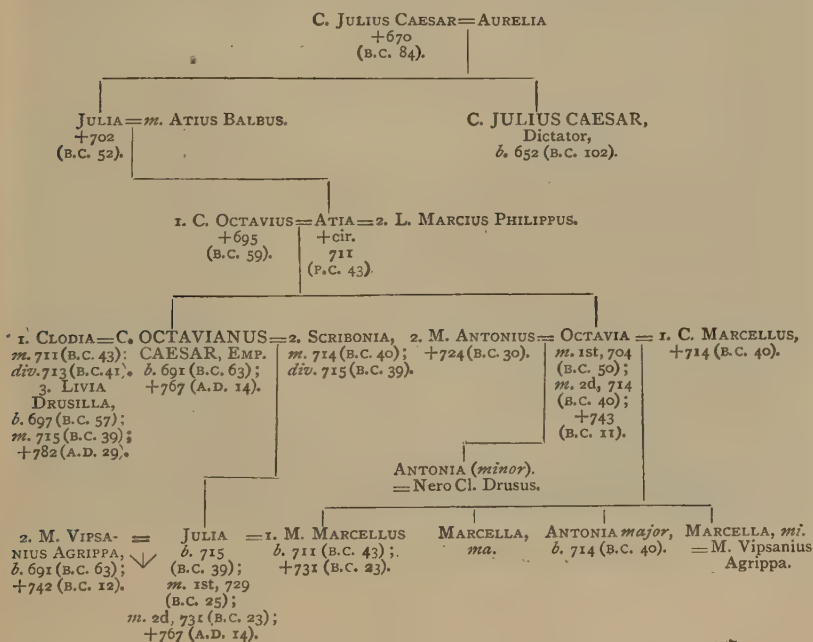
2. A gem at Vienna.

3. Another at Florence. (See Bernoulli.)

# AUGUSTUS

## I.—EARLY YEARS.

JULIUS CAESAR by his will had constituted his great-nephew and adopted son C. Octavius as his heir. Caesar's tenderly loved sister Julia had been married to M. Atius Balbus, of Aricia, a man of plebeian stock, but flattering himself that his family descended from Atys, a Latin chieftain, father of Capys, and son of Alba Silvius, one of the mythical kings of Alba. Balbus was praetor in B.C. 62, and obtained the government of Sardinia, when a medal was struck in profile, and it is possible to trace the family resemblance between Octavius and his grandfather through this coin. By Julia Atius Balbus had a daughter, Atia, who was married to Caius Octavius. This Octavius was a man of means, of equestrian rank, of Veletroe. Roman gossip said that his father was a rope-maker of Thurii, and his grandfather an usurer. Indeed Marc Antony taunted Octavius with this ignoble origin. That the family of the Octavii was one of money-lenders, and possibly had



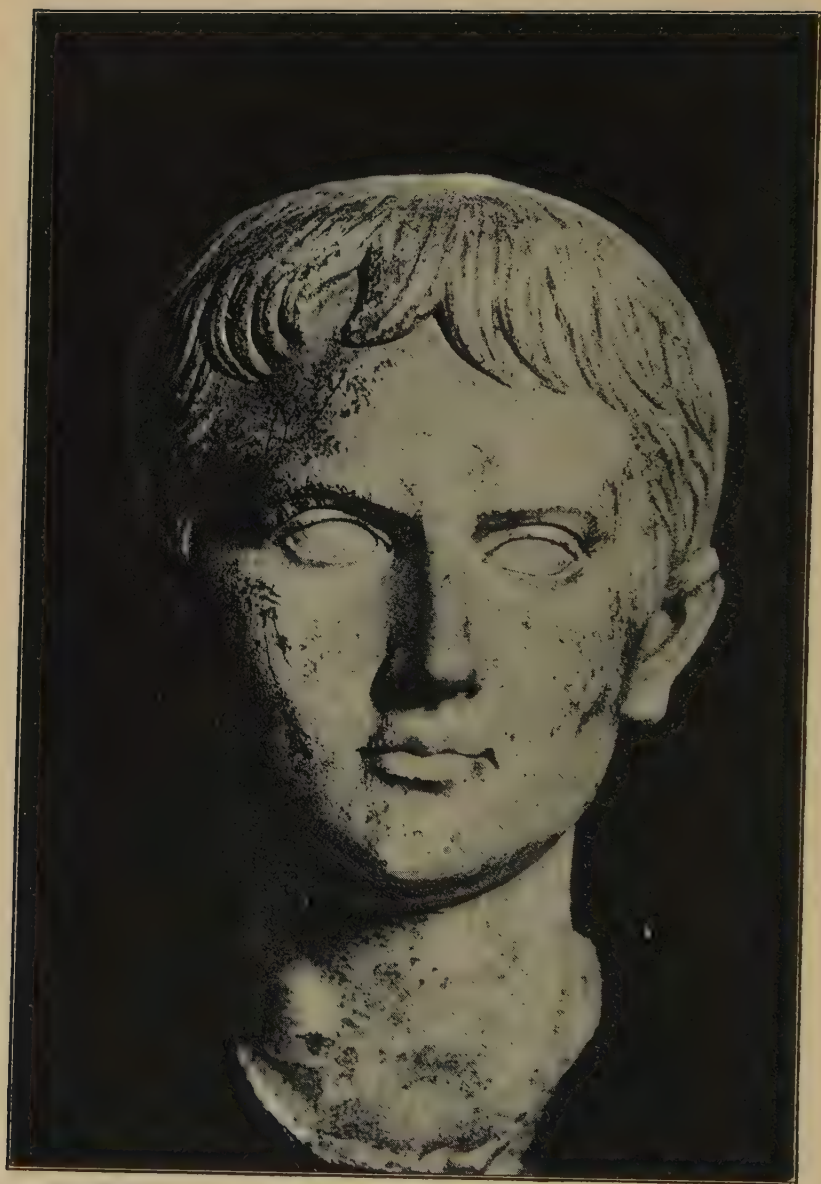


FIG. 31.—The young OCTAVIUS. Bust in the British Museum.



had a rope-factory, is not unlikely. Caius Octavius certainly was a man of means; some said he was one of the manipulators of elections, and that a good deal of the money destined for the voters stuck to his palms when put into them by the candidates. Suetonius doubts this. He says that Caius Octavius 'attained to honourable posts, and discharged the duties of them with much distinction.' He was praetor in B.C. 61, and Velleius Paterculus characterises him as 'a grave, holy, innocent, and rich' man, and that it was owing to the high estimation in which he was held that he was given to wife Atia, the daughter of Julia, Caesar's sister.

In B.C. 60 he was governor of Macedonia, with the title of proconsul, and he administered the affairs of the province with the business exactness of a man accustomed to commercial transactions, and with strict integrity. Cicero recommended his example to his brother Quintus as one deserving to be copied. He was engaged in some small military operations that gained him the title of Imperator, and he returned to Italy at the latter end of B.C. 59, fully expecting to be elected consul, but he died suddenly at Nola in Campania, in a house that belonged to him, and where—in the very same room—seventy-two years later, his son, the great Augustus, died. He was twice married; first to Ancharia, by whom he had one daughter, and secondly to Atia, who became by him the mother of Caius Octavius, the future prince, and of Octavia, married first to C. Marcellus and then to Marc Antony. The young Octavius lost his father when he was but four years old. He was born on September 23d, B.C. 63, in the year when Caesar became Pontifex Maximus. After his father's death his mother married L. Marcus Philippus, a worthy, quietly disposed man, who, notwithstanding his close connection with Caesar's family, remained neutral in the civil wars. Philippus was in Rome when the senate took the field against Caesar, but he abstained from exercising his influence one way or the other, and Caesar gave him, at his request, permission to take no part in the struggle. He therefore remained impassive, watching for the result. Caesar with his usual magnanimity did not resent this lukewarmness in his cause, and when in power lavished on him many marks of esteem and friendship. The young Octavius spent his childhood with his grandmother Julia, and she seems to have taken pains with his education, and to have encouraged in him a love of simplicity and of diligence. On her death in B.C. 52 he delivered a panegyric at the funeral. He then went to live with his mother and stepfather, and his education was supervised by them with the same care. He was delicate in constitution, but clever and singularly beautiful, which, perhaps, his great-uncle attributed to the sacred *ichor* of Venus flowing in his veins. And yet he bore no family resemblance to the old dictator; his face may be seen, by

A.U.C. 691.  
B.C. 63.

A.U.C. 702.  
B.C. 52.  
Act. 11.

comparison with that of his grandfather Atius, to derive from the plebeian Atian and not from the patrician Julian race.

Julius Caesar having no male issue, watched over his education with as much interest as did his mother and stepfather. When

<sup>A U.C. 709.</sup> Octavius was eighteen the youth asked his uncle to promote  
<sup>B.C. 45.</sup> him to be his master of horse, but Caesar repressed his  
<sup>Act. 18.</sup> ambition, and refused his request. At the desire of the

dictator the senate elevated the Octavian house from the plebeian to the patrician order. Caesar now directed that his grand-nephew should complete his studies away from Rome, where the flattery of noble friends was likely to turn his head and make him aspire to offices before his training was complete. He sent him to Apollonia in Illyricum to be placed under accomplished teachers, and moreover to familiarise him there with the life and discipline of a camp.

We have a well-known bust of Octavius at this period of his life, found by Mr. Fagan at Ostia, and it is now one of the treasures of the Vatican gallery. Probably no other bust has been so frequently copied since its discovery in an almost perfect condition, in 1805.

I will quote a few estimates of this portrait.

Viktor Rydberg says: 'The young Octavius is handsome, it might almost be said beautiful.' In contemplating the formation of the features, in which forehead and nose lie nearly in the same line, and are more Hellenic than many Greek portrait busts we now possess, you are reminded that the Octavian race took its rise in Thurii, an Athenian Sybaritic colony in Lower Italy. Suetonius, the biographer, gives us the colours of these forms. The lightly waving hair was of a golden hue, the eyes had a mild and kindly glance, the complexion was between tawny and white.<sup>1</sup>

Ampère says: 'In the Vatican is a young Augustus which is admirable. The features are of the firmest and finest quality, almost delicate. But already there is somewhat of gloom in the look, and menace on that smooth brow.'<sup>2</sup>

Dean Merivale observes of the face of Octavius: 'Conspicuous for the graceful beauty of his mouth and chin, the expression of which was of almost feminine delicacy, and not less for the breadth of his commanding brow and the expressive lustre of his eyes, the person of the young Octavius was well calculated to engage the favour of the legions, and to become the darling of the most devoted Caesareans.'<sup>3</sup>

The critique of M. Mayor<sup>4</sup> is more detailed and scientific:—'The head is that of a young man, full of reflection, pensive and beautiful.

<sup>1</sup> Viktor Rydberg, *Days in Rome*. Rydberg is a Swede; his essays have been translated into German and English—the latter translation published in America.

<sup>2</sup> Ampère (J. J.), *L'empire Romain à Rome*; Paris, 1881.

<sup>3</sup> Merivale (C.), *History of the Romans under the Empire*; London, 2nd ed., 1875.

<sup>4</sup> Mayor (E.), *Notes Fragmentaires pour servir à une Iconographie des Césars au point de vue Anthropologique*; Rome, 1886.

The approximate age is seventeen. The ears are slightly protruding, the nose straight, pointed (but this is a restoration), the mouth normal, well formed, raised at the corners, not as though breaking into a smile, but suggestive of clenched teeth (and these with Augustus were small), an indication of resolution and obstinacy. The eyebrows are prominent, giving the physiognomy an expression of concentration, even of hardness, when seen full face; but of melancholy when seen in profile. The jaw is powerful.'

To my mind, this young face is very instructive. The first impression produced is that of the abnormal development of the upper portion of



FIG. 32.—The young OCTAVIUS. Bust found at Ostia in 1805.  
Mus. Vatic. Hall of Busts, No. 273.

the head, either the result of disease or of a great amount of brain. This remained through life, and marks Caesar Augustus out as a man of very exceptional well-balanced intellectual power, but destitute of imagination. The face is cold; it is self-controlled. The mouth is not sensitive, and there is not the trace of a smile on it. Julius Caesar

was self-controlled, but his control was over deep feelings and passions that had swept through his soul, and had been grappled with and subdued. There are no deep feelings, no tempestuous passions in Octavius. The face is not insincere, but it is not frank.<sup>1</sup>

Octavius was at Apollonia when he received news of the murder of Caesar in March. The troops in Illyricum at once offered him their services if he would lead them into Italy to avenge his uncle's death. But the young Octavius was probably uncertain as to the general feeling in Rome, and he resolved to go there as a private person, taking with him only M. Vipsanius Agrippa, a young man of about his own age, but different in character and of ignoble origin, with whom he had contracted a sincere attachment that was to last through life.

Little did the young Agrippa then suppose that his adhesion to his noble friend, though it would advance himself, would result in misery untold, would envelop his family to its last scion in violence and crime, and lead to its complete extinction.

In the beginning of April Octavius landed near Brundisium, and there heard that his great-uncle had constituted him his heir, and had adopted him into the Julian family. Henceforth, consequent on this adoption, as soon as ratified in the senate, his name would be C. Julius Caesar Octavianus. He at once hastened to his mother and stepfather, who were residing in a country seat near Naples, and they strongly dissuaded him from attempting to claim the inheritance bequeathed to him. They foresaw that his appearance in the passion-tossed arena would lead to fresh broils and complications. But he persisted in his resolution, and shortly after, to cut short their urgency, started for the capital. On his road he was met by the veterans of Caesar, who left their ploughs and pruning-knives, in crowds, entreating that he would put himself at their head and lead them against the murderers. He declined their offers for the time.

Octavius entered Rome quietly and unnoticed, and at once visited his friends and asked them to appear next day in the forum, well attended. He came forward at the time he had appointed, and, advancing to the tribune, where sat as praetor the brother of Antony, he announced that he accepted his adoption by Caesar. Then he went to see Marc Antony in the palace he had bought, that had once belonged to Pompeius. The consul did not come to him at once, but made 'the boy' wait his leisure in the vestibule. When Octavius was finally admitted, after the preliminary salutations and compliments, Octavius addressed him in a tone of firmness that probably surprised Antony. He thanked him for having opposed the grant by the senate

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Conrad Dressler remarks on the two busts of the young Octavius—that in the Vatican, and that in the British Museum,—‘I have copied both, and know both very well. The finest, in my opinion, is that in the British Museum.’



of recompenses to the assassins ; he told Antony that he could excuse the lukewarmness with which he had acted at the outset, as due to caution that was perhaps necessary, and then asked the consul why, when the voice of the people of Rome had made itself heard on the day of the funeral, he had not at once seized the opportunity and acted upon it. Instead of proceeding at once against the murderers, he had temporised, and allowed them to escape out of Italy into the provinces. ' Perhaps,' added Octavius, ' my age and the respect due to your office ought to prevent my addressing you in this tone, yet I cannot regret it, for I speak as the friend of Caesar, and as the one whom he has raised to the highest degree of honour and power.' Then he adroitly added, ' I myself am perhaps unworthy, and I know very well whom my uncle wished to have adopted, and would have adopted, had he not been absolutely certain that Marc Antony would decline to exchange the honour of descent from Hercules for that from Aeneas.' Octavius pushed his advantage. He invited the consul to assist him in the pursuit and punishment of the murderers.

It will be remembered that immediately after the murder Antony had seized the papers and accumulated treasure of Caesar. The latter he had dispersed among the senators, large sums he had given to the worthless Dolabella, and to Cinna, to buy their neutrality, if he could not purchase their assistance. Octavius now approached the delicate topic of calling the consul to account for thus dealing with the effects of his adopted father. ' You must know,' said he, ' that by the will of Caesar a sum of money has been bequeathed to each citizen of Rome ; and it is my desire at once to discharge this bequest. Otherwise I shall be reproached as ungrateful to his memory. You carried away into your own house, as a place of greater security, all my father's treasure. I desire that you should retain the jewels and objects of artistic value ; these I cheerfully abandon to you. But that I may pay the legacy made to the people of Rome, I must ask you to restore to me all the money my father had accumulated, and that I shall divide, according to his last wishes, among the three hundred thousand citizens. And if that will not suffice for the discharge of the debt, I shall ask you to lend me the requisite sum, or stand guarantee for me if I borrow it from the public treasury.' Antony listened with amazement at this bold address from a beardless boy. He answered in a bantering tone : ' My lad, you are mistaken in supposing that the empire of Caesar passed to you with his name and his inheritance. If it had, then possibly you would have been justified in calling me to account. But it is not so. I owe you nothing. It is quite true that I stood in the way of pensions and rewards being decreed to the murderers,—and you ought to thank me for that. But for my intervention, Caesar would have been declared a tyrant, all his acts reversed, and where would you have been then with your fine inheritance ? You talk rank nonsense when you speak of

borrowing from the treasury. The treasury is exhausted. As for Caesar's private moneys, you magnify the amount beyond all reason. What there was I did convey to my house, and I spent it in the purchase of votes to obtain a decree favourable to the memory of Caesar. If aught remains to you, take my advice, boy, and don't play ducks and drakes with it among the people, but prudently spend it in buying to yourself friends among the senate, now ill-disposed to your pretensions. You have been reading the Greek authors—surely out of them you have picked this lesson, that the populace is inconstant as the sea. What it throws up one day it swallows the next.'

We get the account of this meeting from Appian, a late writer, but it bears on the face of it evidence of truth, though the speeches have no doubt been put into the mouths of the speakers by the writer. It explains the position of Octavius thereafter. When he left the palace of Antony, he felt that he and the consul could not work together. As for Antony, he put down this address to him by the heir of Caesar as the impudence of youth, and made merry over it at table that night.

Octavius, however, was, as a boy, what he afterwards was as a man,—of dogged resolution, and he would not suffer himself to be thus defeated. As yet, though he had made his claim to be adopted into the Julian family, and to be the son of Caesar, this claim had not been ratified, and to become legal it must be ratified by the senate and the assembly of the people. Antony, through his brother, the tribune, threw impediments in his way, postponing the business from day to day, thus manifesting an *animus* against the youth, that served still deeper to root in him the conviction of the impossibility of working along with the consul for the end he had in view.

Octavius at once caused the effects of the deceased to be sold; he borrowed from his relatives, his mother, his stepfather, from his personal friends, such a sum as he needed. He sold all his own estates, and with the proceeds defrayed the bequest of Caesar to the people, which learning how matters stood, that Antony had taken all the money of Caesar and thrown it by handfuls into senatorial laps, murmured at the injustice done to the heir, and lost confidence in the consul. The opposition of Antony was manifested soon after in a manner so marked, that it alienated from him a good number of Caesarians. Some public games were to be given, and Octavius demanded that the golden throne and jewelled crown that the senate had decreed to his father should be shown. The tribunes, at the instigation of Antony, refused to sanction this mark of honour. Soon after, the heir of Caesar himself gave games, and again the permission was refused. Octavius mounted the rostrum and spoke against Antony, who sent men to pluck him down from the tribune, and threaten him with prison.

The two now pitted against each other were as different in character as could well be conceived. On the one side was Antony, a man of experience, years, and position, on the other a boy who had his future to make. Antony with all his abilities and knowledge of the world was no match for the lad, raw and untried, for Octavius had that tenacity of purpose which was lacking in the other.

‘Caesar (Octavius) and Antony were opposed at every point,’ says Dio Cassius. ‘There was no open breach, but however much they had disguised their antagonism, their conduct towards each other was hostile. The result was that all men in Rome were in uncertainty and bewilderment. Peace existed, but war was in prospect; under the thin veil of freedom, despotism raised her head. Antony seemed to have the advantage, because he was consul, but the people turned to Caesar, from the regard it bore to the memory of Julius, his father by adoption, and from the hopes it entertained, but especially because of the hate it bore to the powerful Antony, and the thought it entertained that Octavius was the weaker. Neither was loved, but what the people desired was novelty, and the pleasure of upsetting those in power and setting up the feebler, and in the general confusion of helping themselves to what they coveted. They sought to humble Antony by using Caesar against him, with the object afterwards of throwing their tool aside. Oppressed by every man in power, they upset each by the aid of some other man, with the intention of destroying this latter also. So it came about that one after another became an object of their jealousy, and that they showed now regard, then hate, and him whom they exalted to-day, they trampled on upon the morrow.’

Such was the condition of affairs. Octavius knew the temper of the *optimates*, and all who were of wealth and rank in Rome, knew that no trust was to be placed in them, knew that not in Rome but in the camp he must form to himself a party on which he could rely, and forge a weapon that would not cut his hand when using it.

Antony had had all the cards in his own hands; but he had turned his attention from the game, and they had fallen from him to be picked up and used against him by his young but watchful adversary.

Among the nobility, Antony was hated implacably, because they feared him. The populace were angry because they thought he was not dealing generously with Caesar's heir, and was slack in avenging Caesar's death. The young Octavius quietly, watchfully, advanced his cause, step by step. He won the populace by his engaging exterior and pleasant manner. He disarmed the suspicions of the nobles. All the while, a number of his uncle's veterans began to gather about him. A series of ignoble quarrels ensued, with uproar in the streets and in the forum. Antony treated Octavius as an insolent boy, and the latter denounced the rapacity and dishonesty of the consul. They hated each other cordially; but the hatred of Antony was tempered by con-

tempt. Both were aiming at the same object, and each sought to prevent the other from attaining it.

Then both departed for Campania to rouse the veterans of Caesar, who had been planted there on state lands; and each returned at the head of his levies. Octavius mustered ten thousand men; Antony had hurried to Brundisium to secure four legions from Epirus that had been summoned home. But the largess he offered them was only a hundred denarii a man, and the soldiers laughed in his face. Enraged at their conduct, Antony seized the ringleaders and decimated them. This severity was unavailing, and on the first opportunity two of the legions deserted to his rival, and Antony had great difficulty in securing the other two. Rome was in consternation. Cicero, with his usual shortsighted policy, endeavoured to gain the nephew of Caesar to the side of the oligarchy. The actual murderers had fled, and the senate could represent itself as innocent of the bloodshed. It had ratified the acts of Caesar, and had not decreed honours to his murderers. It was therefore, it fondly thought, not compromised in the crime; it could use Octavius as its tool against Antony, and then, as Cicero confided to his friend Atticus, '*remove*' him, as it had removed Caesar.

The year of Antony's consulship drew to an end. He had arrogated to himself the province of Cisalpine Gaul, and having collected all the troops he could muster at Ariminium, which, notwithstanding desertions, formed a large and formidable force, he marched into his province, to drive thence Decimus Brutus, who had been promised the province by Caesar, and had hurried thither, when he found Rome too hot to hold him, and had placed himself there at the head of the legions.

The situation became now complicated and confused to the last degree. Decimus claimed the province as granted to him by Caesar, and Caesar's acts had been ratified by the senate after his murder. Antony, however, was resolved on the destruction of the assassin of Caesar, and he moved against him. The new consuls were Hirtius and Pansa, old officers of Caesar; and they were commissioned by the senate to proceed in conjunction with Octavius to the relief of Decimus, who was shut into Mutina by Antony. Octavius was in an embarrassing position, moving to the succour of the man whom he was bound by all sense of honour and gratitude to punish, and against the man who was threatening the murderer. But in the general entanglement it is difficult to see what else Octavius could have done. He was resolved, as far as we can judge, not to lend an active hand in the relief of Decimus Brutus. At the same time it was obvious that Antony was not aiming only at the punishment of Caesar's murderers, but also at his own advancement; and he had proved himself capricious, unscrupulous, and untrustworthy.

Two battles ensued: Antony was defeated, but one consul was slain

A. U. C. 711.

B. C. 43.

Act. 20.



and the other mortally wounded. Then, with all his energy and abilities fully excited, Antony withdrew his shattered troops beyond the Alps to effect a junction with Lepidus. Hitherto the army had been under the command of the consuls, now the troops were completely under the control of Octavius. He refused to pursue Antony, and he refused also to unite with the murderer Decimus.

The senatorial party were at once filled with alarm. Cicero, who, with his usual conceit, had supposed that he had manipulated Octavius, and had moulded the 'boy' into his own creature, was silenced, held his breath, and looked on in astonishment and apprehension.

Octavius did not, indeed, at once attack Decimus Brutus within the lines of Mutina; he waited his time, sent messengers to Antony and Lepidus with overtures of reconciliation and union against the common foe, and turned and marched back to Rome. At once Cicero and the senators decamped. They had discovered their mistake, and they loudly cried 'Treason!' and charged Octavius with having murdered the consuls. Octavius was, however, received by the populace with enthusiasm, and, though only twenty, was invested with the consulship, and given as his colleague Q. Pedius, his first cousin twice removed. And now, and not till now, did he obtain what he had hitherto demanded in vain, his adoption, according to the will of Caesar, into the Julian family as the son of the dictator. Thenceforth he became legally entitled to the name which he had already assumed, and by which we shall henceforth designate him.

Three legions had been left by the senators to defend the walls and gate that commanded the Flaminian Way, along which Octavian had advanced, whilst they scampered out of the gates in all directions at the further extremity of Rome. These legions offered no resistance, but passed over to the service of Octavian.

The first act done by the heir of Caesar in Rome when consul was to obtain the passing of a law condemning to death the murderers of his uncle. They were summoned by herald to appear, and when they did not answer to their names were sentenced as contumacious. Thus Octavian had proclaimed the object for which he had crossed into Italy; he had succeeded in establishing his sonship to Caesar, and had collected the army now under his command. The opportunity had been Antony's; but Antony, with his wonted imprudence and love of pleasure, after having put his hand to the good work of justice, had halted and relaxed his efforts. Therefore the legitimate heir and representative of Caesar took from him the task, and solemnly charged himself with the execution.

It is usually said that Octavian was a profound dissembler, that as a boy he wore the mask, subtle and keen of intellect, he maintained a face impenetrable, and deceived both Cicero and all the oligarchical party, and by this means got them to trust him, to their own overthrow.

But surely no boy of nineteen or twenty was ever such a master in dissimulation! The position in which the youth found himself was of incomparable difficulty. The man to whom he would have looked naturally as his helper and friend failed him utterly: had robbed him of his uncle's treasure, and endeavoured in every way to thwart him in his attempt to carry out the wishes of the deceased. It was the great party of blockheads, with the clever but not astute Cicero, who forced him into a false position, deceiving themselves in their overweening self-conceit in supposing that they could use a boy like Octavian as an unintelligent tool. He marched with the consuls Pansa and Hirtius, because he could not help himself, and Hirtius and Pansa he knew had loved Caesar and abhorred his assassins; in them he had trusted to find assistance. They died, and he was left alone at the head of an army.

When Octavian had made himself master of Rome he waited the arrival of Antony and Lepidus. Antony had now discovered the mistake he had made in underrating the boy Octavian; and he accepted the overtures of Octavian for reconciliation, not only because he was given a chance of chastising his enemies, but also because he was ever ready to acknowledge his mistake and patch up a quarrel.

## II.—THE TRIUMVIRATE.

IN the Recio, near Bologna (Bononia), was a rubbly isle, and on this isle of boulders met Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus to form a triumvirate and divide the world between them, after they should have executed the one solemn task that bound them together,—the chastisement of the murderers.

But there was another and a troublesome consideration to be taken in hand and dealt with. The legions which had assisted Octavian had to be rewarded. The treasury was empty: Octavian had sold all his own possessions so as to pay Caesar's bequest to the citizens of Rome. There was available but a single source whence the demands of the soldiers could be supplied,—the property of the proscribed. Thus Sulla had rewarded his veterans. Caesar had planted the soldiers of Pompeius and his own on the public lands, which were now in their occupation and unavailable for distribution. Octavian must reward his legions, and he could reward them only by laying his hands on confiscated goods. The liberators had brought this on Italy, and Italy was now to undergo the miseries of a country taken by foreign invaders; farmers and land-owners to be turned out of their estates, which were to be given to needy and insolent soldiers. Octavian yielded to the necessity; he added to the proscription list the names of many whom he would willingly have spared had he not desired their acres.



FIG. 33.—OCTAVIANUS. Bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

We have two valuable busts of Octavian at this period of his career ; they represent him about the age of 20-25 ; one is in the Berlin Museum, and came from Cairo. This is mutilated : the original polish remains on portions of the stone.<sup>1</sup> There is the same cold resolution in this as in the younger portrait (Fig. 32), but more of humanity in it. A trace of distress is observable. Augustus has been plunged into the great whirlpool of life, and is battling for existence. But, for all that, there is a certain repose—the repose of a mind made up and resolved on accomplishing an end—not the repose of a mind at rest after accomplishment. The second is of Octavian a year or two later, a colossal head found at Veii in 1811 (Fig. 34).<sup>2</sup> It represents him after the proscription. The expression of pain is intensified. The mouth has become more resolute, and the jaws more set. His course is adopted, nothing will divert him from it, and those who oppose him must go under his feet.

There is a third bust of him at a still more advanced age, when about 28, at Florence in the Uffizi Palace (Fig. 33). Of this M. Mayor says : ‘A splendid bust, of historic verity and physiognomical *vraisemblance*. This is Octavian in struggle. The look is searching, piercing, far-seeing. The eyes seem to be drawn together by concentration of thought. The lips are compressed, narrowed by the effect of a resolution cold and cruel.’ As a work of art, however, Mr. Dressler does not highly regard it. But the nose is a restoration.

Cold Augustus was, hardly cruel for cruelty’s sake. The legions had to be paid : they must be paid at the expense of some persons, and those persons were, of course, Caesar’s enemies. Declared enemies first of all, and when their gold and acres did not suffice, suspected enemies were included in the proscription to make up the complement. It is said that the number included in the roll was 300 senators and 2000 knights. A large number of the latter had fatally compromised themselves by forming a confederation bound to support the assassins with money so as to enable them to raise an army. But, although many of those proscribed fell victims, yet a good many were suffered to escape, their possessions rather than their lives being sought. Thus it was with Lucius Caesar, the uncle of Antony on his mother’s side, and with Paullus Aemilius, brother of Lepidus ; they were proscribed, but allowed to escape from Italy unhurt in person. Cicero might have escaped had he possessed sufficient resolution ; his name was in the first list, and a month was allowed to elapse between the notification of his danger and his actual death. Sextus Pompeius sent his vessels to cruise off the coast to receive such as made their way to the shore ; and of those who were taken not all were put to death. Lepidus and Antony were accessible to bribes, and ready to listen to entreaties. Octavian seems to have desired to show his conduct to advantage as lenient in

<sup>1</sup> Royal Gallery, No. 344.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. Chiaramonti, in Vatican, No. 401.



contrast with the ferocity of Antony. Behind Antony stood the remorseless Fulvia, and he himself had real wrongs and bitter insults to avenge. He was an impulsive man, with hot blood, and certainly did not scruple to inscribe on the fatal lists the names of all who had treated him with contumely, or had obstructed him when consul in Rome; but his anger did not last long.



FIG. 34.—OCTAVIANUS. Bust in Museum Chiaramonti, No. 401.

It is deserving of notice that Dio, a writer never willing to allow a good quality to one of the Caesars, and to put their conduct in other than an unfavourable light, exonerates Octavian from having had any share in the murders of the proscribed. He says: 'This was brought about mainly by Lepidus and Antonius, who, having been long in honour under Julius Caesar, and having held many offices in state and army, had acquired many enemies. But as Caesar (Octavian) was associated with them in power, an appearance of complicity attached to him. But he was not cruel by nature, and he had no occasion for

putting many to death; moreover, he had resolved to imitate the example of his adoptive father. Added to this, he was young, was just entering on his career, and sought rather to gain hearts than alienate them. No sooner was he in sole power than he showed no signs of severity, and at that time he caused the death of very few, and saved very many. He proceeded with the utmost severity against such as betrayed their masters or friends, but was most favourable to such as helped the proscribed to escape.' Dio would never have said this of Octavian unless he had good authority for the statement.

The sale of the goods of the victims and exiles met with little success. Buyers were afraid to invest. Money was still needed. In order to obtain it, the triumvirs required 1300 of the richest ladies of Rome to produce a schedule of their property, and pay from it a contribution towards the expenses of the war. The ladies deputed some of their number to plead their cause with the women of the families of the triumvirs. The mother, Antonia, and the virtuous Octavia, received them with kindness; but Fulvia, the rancorous wife of Antony, refused to see them. Then, all united, these 1300 ladies marched to the forum, where sat the triumvirs. The soldiers and the people made way for them, and one of them, Hortensia, spoke in the name of all. Their boldness disconcerted the triumvirs, and orders were issued that they should be sent back. But the populace was excited and touched, and with loud cries pleaded with Antony that he should withdraw his order that their goods should be taxed.

After the battle of Philippi, in which the liberators were defeated and Brutus and Cassius slain, Antony went into Asia, and Octavian returned to Rome, still suffering from a malady that had prevented him from taking part himself in the battle of Philippi.

'The patriot leaders,' says Dean Merivale, 'sufficiently proved by their own example, since Caesar's death, that the continuance of legitimate government was impossible. The authority they held in the provinces they had seized in direct defiance of legitimate authority; their only plea being the appointment of the very tyrant whom they had murdered, and whose acts they had denounced. Cassius rebuked Brutus for controlling the profligate corruption of one of their adherents, L. Pella; and Brutus before his last battle promised his soldiers the plunder of Thessalonica and Lacedaemon.'

On his return to Rome, Octavian had to supervise the distribution of lands among his soldiers. There were certain towns marked out as colonies, and their public lands were taken from them. These towns complained. If their domains were to be taken, let them receive compensation. If no compensation were forthcoming from an empty exchequer, then let not the burden fall on them only, but be spread over all Italy. Troops of old men, lads, women with their children, peasants from the farms to be confiscated poured into Rome, crowded

the steps of the temples where they wept and prayed, and in every street exhibited their distress and complained of the wrong done them. The populace of Rome was touched, and now saw when too late, that the supremacy had passed from the electoral booths to the soldiers and the camp, and that every change in the government involved devastation at their own doors. The exasperated citizens attacked the soldiers; there were street fights, and blood flowed—but the military remained masters.

Octavian, distressed, perplexed, unwilling to do a wrong and yet unable to prevent it, finding the citizens and people of Italy incensed, and the soldiers clamorous, tried, but tried in vain, to mitigate the severity of the measures necessity had forced him to adopt. Placed between the dissatisfaction of the spoilers and the murmurs of the spoiled, he had recourse to the treasures collected in the temples of the gods; he robbed them, pretending to take a loan, and made fresh largesses to the military.

‘As for those who were despoiled,’ says Appian, ‘they called down judgment on him for their woes; but he was forced to endure their wrath so as to hold his own with the army.’

In the theatre one day, a soldier looking out for a seat and finding none vacant among the people took one among the knights. Octavian ordered him to quit the place. As the soldiers did not see him accommodated with another, they made a riot in the theatre, and Octavian was obliged to produce the man and put him where he could see the play. On the day on which the allotments of land were to be read out to the military in the field of Mars, Octavian did not arrive to the minute. The insolent soldiers became uproarious, and were called to order by a centurion. He told them that the triumvir was in bad health, and that this occasioned the delay. The soldiers howled out that this was no excuse, and pelted their officer with stones. He withdrew and was pursued. To escape those who were after him, he leaped into the Tiber. He was fished out and his throat cut, and the soldiers cast his body down across the street by which Octavian was to arrive. The triumvir turned aside from the corpse, and on reaching the Campus Martius rebuked the assassins in mild terms for their insubordination, and hastily made the required grants to their satisfaction. He had not the power to control and chastise their turbulence, and was glad to dismiss them from the capital to their newly acquired estates. The soldiers had received the lands, but the citizens, swollen in numbers by the destitute peasants turned out of their farms, were starving. Sextus Pompeius, master of the sea, intercepted the convoys of grain. Riots ensued. Shops were shut and business brought to a standstill. The mob drove away the magistrates with cries that they would have no magistrates in a town given up to violence and to famine. Such was the state of affairs with which a young man not long out of his teens was called on to cope.

It seems to me that we can see much of all this in the three busts of Octavian last described. There is a cloud on his brow, a cloud that deepens. It is almost certainly caused by inner distress, the distress of a conscience driven to acts of violence and wrong which he could not justify on any other plea than necessity. In the later portraits of Augustus there is none of this cloud, it has cleared completely away, and left an aspect of inner serenity. Julius Caesar's face begins without an expression of sadness, inspired rather with confidence in his destiny,



FIG. 35.—OCTAVIANUS AUGUSTUS. Sardonyx in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup>

but his last portraits show him with traces of pain in the lines of his face, not caused by failure of health, but by loss of trust in mankind—in his friends. But in the case of Augustus the reverse is the case—all the pain and trouble are in the young face, and vanish from that of Augustus in plenitude and security of power.

I do not think that we have reason for supposing that Octavian started on the career which brought him to absolute monarchy, with any

<sup>1</sup> The band round the head is a renaissance addition.



clear view of what he was to reach. He had plenty of abilities, but none of that political and statesmanly knowledge of the requirements of the commonwealth that Julius Caesar had. Caesar aimed at the regeneration of the state, and in so aiming reached absolutism. Octavian had no definite political aim before him. He desired to seize on a position of power and, above all, security for himself. He was forced into his throne as lord of the world by circumstance, he did not win it by perseverance in seeking it. As long as Antony was of any use he used him. He did his utmost to associate him with himself in power. Only when the voice of the western half of the Roman world demanded war with Egypt did he draw his sword against Antony. Egypt was the granary of Italy, and the Romans saw with alarm that Antony, completely controlled by the genius of Cleopatra, was about to make Egypt independent; and Egypt independent could starve Rome into subjection. It was in order to attach Antony to him, through his masculine-minded wife, Fulvia, that Octavian, in B.C. 43, betrothed himself to Clodia, her youngest daughter, by her former husband the demagogue. But she was a child, and at the outbreak of the Perusian war with Lucius Antonius, in B.C. 41, he divorced her and sent her back to her mother Fulvia, and never allowed that she had been his wife in reality. Later, in the desperate hope of breaking the chains that attached Antony to Cleopatra, he gave him his dearly loved sister Octavia. All which points to Octavian having had no wish to break with his colleague, so as to establish his own supremacy.

A. U. C. 713.  
B. C. 41.  
Aet. 22.

### III.—LIVIA.

IN B.C. 40, when Octavian was aged twenty-three, he married Scribonia for political ends. Her brother, Lucius Scribonius Libo, was one of the most important adherents of the great Pompeius; and after the death of Pompeius Magnus he remained faithful to the cause which he represented. Libo gave his daughter to Sextus, the present head of the Pompeian party. His object was to unite the triumvir Antony with Sextus Pompeius against Octavian, to enable them thus combined to crush the Caesarian. But Octavian saw his danger, and to escape it negotiated through Maecenas his friend to obtain the hand of the sister of Scribonius. Scribonius, influenced by the prospect of reconciliation among rivals in the civil broils, gave his consent. Scribonia was a good many years older than her husband. She had already been twice married and twice made a widow. By one of her former husbands, Cornelius Scipio, she had a son, P. Cornelius Scipio, and a daughter, Cornelia. It is probable that her age at her union with Octavian was not under thirty; probably it was five-and-thirty. Of love

and inclination in this purely political alliance there was none, at all events on the side of Octavian. But Scribonia was not without ambition. A marriage with the powerful triumvir—the adopted son and heir of the great Caesar—flattered her pride, and the extraordinary beauty of her young husband certainly must have won her affection. She enjoyed her position as his wife, however, but a very short while. Octavian had sought her so as to disarm the opposition of Sextus Pompeius, who commanded the seas and cut off the supplies of corn from the citizens of Rome. When the political purpose of the union was accomplished, or rather, when the continued hostility of Sextus showed him that his attempt to patch up the quarrel with a marriage was unavailing, he divorced Scribonia.

She was a woman of old-fashioned dignity,<sup>1</sup> of fading charms, and—Octavian had fallen in love with Livia, the wife of Tiberius Nero.

A.U.C. 714.  
B.C. 40.  
Aet. 23.

Scribonia received from him her letter of divorce only a few days after she had borne him the only child he ever had, that daughter Julia, who was to continue the race of Octavian till it was quenched in the blood of Nero.

As reason for the separation, Octavian alleged ‘perversity of character’ in Scribonia, and incompatibility of temper. He had given her occasion for offence, and cause to exasperate the temper of all but a saint, by his infatuation for Livia.

This divorce was disastrous to Octavian and fateful to his whole race. The heartless and cruel repudiation of a blameless wife, done, moreover, at a time when she had just given him his first-born babe, was visited on Augustus and his whole house; it occasioned him the bitterest sorrows of his life, and provoked the extinction which came on the issue of that Livia, for whose sake Scribonia was deserted.

‘By this act,’ says Adolf Stahr,<sup>2</sup> ‘Octavian himself strewed the seeds of discord which were to disturb fatally the concord of the imperial family, not during his own life only, but far beyond it. Scribonia would have been no woman not to have felt deadly hatred towards that woman in whom she saw the robber of her honour, the wrecker of her happiness, the overthrower of her ambition, and by means of whom a new family forced its way into that place which should have been hers, and usurped her claims and her hopes. As the mother of Julia, the only daughter of the sovereign, as the ancestress of Julia’s children and grandchildren, she remained, in spite of the separation, the head of the Julian race, the dynasty called to sovereignty. No wonder then that henceforth she stood in hostile opposition to the Claudian Livia and her two children. This deadly animosity between the two family branches of the imperial house was reflected more than two generations later in the memoirs of the great-grandchild of Scribonia, the second Agrippina, wife of the Emperor Claudius, and mother of Nero, the source whence,

<sup>1</sup> ‘Gravis femina.’—Seneca, *Ep.* 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Kaiser-Frauen*, 1880 (2d ed.), p. 6.

poisoned as it was with fiercest hate towards Livia and her son, the Emperor Tiberius, Tacitus drew the colours with which he painted both one and the other in his *Annals*.' Scribonia lived till after A.D. 2, when she accompanied her daughter Julia into exile. How long after we do not know; she must have died between her seventieth and eightieth year.



FIG. 36.—LIVIA. Sardonyx in the Hague Museum, enlarged.

Livia Drusilla, who succeeded Scribonia, not in the affections of Octavian, for such Scribonia had never enjoyed, but in her position as wife, was descended from the great Claudian family, one of the bluest blooded of aristocratic Rome. The Claudii were both patrician and plebeian, but the patrician Claudii were of Sabine origin, and came to Rome in B.C. 504; their earliest known ancestor was Appius Claudius of Regillum, who had advocated peace between the Sabines and the Romans when hostilities broke out betwixt the two nations soon after the foundation of the commonwealth. He had been received into the rank of patricians, and granted lands beyond the Anio, on which his clients settled who were thenceforth enrolled in the Claudian tribe. From this man Livia was fourteenth in descent. Haughty, insolent in their aristocratic pride, remarkable for their high-born beauty, they incurred the intense hatred of the commonalty, which in their pride they would not condescend to mitigate. 'That house,' says Niebuhr, 'during the course of centuries produced several very eminent, few great, men; hardly a single noble-minded one. In all ages it distinguished itself alike by a spirit

of haughty defiance, by disdain for the laws, and iron hardness of heart.<sup>1</sup> It was remarked of this stately family that it, almost alone among the Roman gentes, would not stoop to recruit its ranks by adoption. To this family belonged the infamous Appius Claudius, with whom the name of the unhappy Virginia is associated ; but also the spotless Vestal Claudia, who, when charged with incontinency, boldly called on the goddess Cybele to vindicate her innocence, and stepping to the banks of the Tiber, where lay stranded a vessel containing the image of the goddess, took hold of the rope and drew the vessel up stream after her.

One ancestor of Livia was that Publius Claudius Pulcher, who, at the time of the Punic wars, having been saluted with clamours for the appointment of a dictator to save Rome from her imminent peril, after the loss of a battle at sea, was said scornfully to have offered the Roman people the son of one of his freedmen as a fit person for them to elect to the highest position in the republic.

The father of Livia was Claudius Pulcher, who had been adopted by Livius Drusus, and thenceforth he bore the name of Livius Drusus Claudianus. Cicero mentions him as an avaricious man of lax morals.<sup>1</sup> He joined the cause of the Liberators, and fought against Octavian and Antony in the battle of Philippi. On the defeat of his side he committed suicide.

Livia was born on September 28th of the year B.C. 57, and was therefore sixteen when her father died. She had already been married to a man of the Claudian family, Tiberius Claudius Nero, a man much older than herself, for we know that in the year 50, when Livia was hardly seven years old, he proposed for the hand of Tullia, the daughter of Cicero, but failed in obtaining it.

Livia's youth had not been a happy one. A few months after the bloody death of her father she bore her husband a son, born on the 16th November, and afterwards known as the Emperor Tiberius ; she was almost immediately after enveloped in the commotions of the civil war. Claudius Nero, her husband, had been quaestor under Julius Caesar, and had distinguished himself as admiral of Caesar's fleet in the Alexandrian war. In reward for his services, the dictator had given him the priesthood, and appointed him to superintend the colonies that were to be founded in Gaul—Arles and Narbonne. But he was one of the many who returned the kindnesses of the great man with ingratitude ; for, after Caesar's murder, he went over to the side of the Liberators, and he it was who proposed in the senate that a public reward should be given to the assassins. In the Perusian outbreak under Lucius Antonius he took part against Octavian ; on the defeat of Antonius, he fled to Praeneste, and thence to Naples, where he endeavoured to rouse the inhabitants of Campania against Octavian. As he failed in doing

<sup>1</sup> It is not, however, quite certain that the Drusus of Cicero's letters is the same man as the father of Livia.



this, he fled to Sextus Pompeius in Sicily, where his pride was offended by some petty slight, and he left Sicily and joined Marc Antony. After the compact of Brundisium he received pardon, and returned to Rome. In all his flights and journeys the young Livia and her child Tiberius accompanied him, sharing his dangers and hardships. In their escape from Naples, which took place with great precipitation, she carried the child in her own arms, and twice, when in concealment, was all but betrayed by the crying of the babe. She followed her husband to Sicily and Greece; in Lacedaemon she was again in peril of her life, for, during a flight by night, the forest through which she was escaping was on fire, and she had both her hair and her garments scorched by the



FIG. 37.—LIVIA. Sardonyx in the Uffizi Palace, Florence, enlarged.<sup>1</sup>

flames. All these circumstances served to intensify the love with which she always held to her first-born child. Livia was eighteen when she returned to Rome with her husband, where speedily the story of her romantic adventures reached the ears of Octavian, and her wonderful beauty arrested his eyes and enchained his heart.

So impetuous and intense was the passion he had conceived for Livia, that he divorced Scribonia, as we have seen, and insisted on Cl. Nero separating from his young wife in order that he might marry her, although she was in expectation of shortly becoming a mother again. It gives us a curious insight into the coolness and callousness with which these unions were formed and broken in Rome, when we read that at the marriage of Livia with Octavian

A.U.C. 716.  
B.C. 38.  
Aet. 25.

<sup>1</sup> In both Figs. 36 and 37 the portions below the dotted lines are a restoration.

her former husband, Drusus, gave her away in place of her father, who was dead.

At the wedding feast a little incident occurred that set all Rome a-ringing. Livia had a small page, and when the little fellow saw Livia enter and seat herself at table with Octavian, whereas Tiberius Drusus was placed at another table, 'Mistress, mistress!' shouted the boy, 'you've got into the wrong place. There is your husband—yonder.' No doubt he had his ears boxed for the uncalled-for correction.

Three months later, Livia became mother again, of a second boy, who was named Drusus Nero. Octavian took the babe up in his arms and sent him to his father; then he entered in his journal, 'To-day my wife, Livia, bore me a boy, whom I, Caesar, have ordered to be sent to his father, Nero.' The father, however, died soon after, and by his last request Octavian was constituted guardian of his two sons. The slanderous tongues of Rome naturally said that Drusus was in fact the son of Octavian, and the child of adultery. There is no reason for so judging from the authentic portraits of Drusus, which all bear a resemblance to his elder brother, and not a trace in them of the features of Augustus.

Livia's portrait is difficult to identify. She was the first Roman lady whose profile appeared on a medal. There are a good many coins that bear her name, but in almost every case it is impossible to regard the heads on these as portraits. They represent Livia idealised as a goddess, with formal Greek features. One only differs from these, and that is the best, of Livia in old age represented along with Augustus. The rest give us Livia as Pietas Augusta, or Salus Augusta, or Justitia, or as Diana. But fortunately there are some gems on which more reliance can be placed. One of these is the famous cameo of the S. Chapelle at Paris. Another—but that shows her when aged—is an engraved gem in the Uffizi Palace, Florence (*Frontispiece*). Also the Blacas onyx of Livia as Ceres. An exquisite red jasper of the Praun collection is a cinque-cento copy of an antique. That it is Livia is doubtful. Both the latter are given by King (xxxii. 3, xlix. 10).

Of statues and busts there are a good many that pass for Livia, all more or less idealised.<sup>1</sup> The best known is the beautiful statue in the Vatican as Piety, with arms extended as in prayer. This was found at Otricoli. The face is to the last degree characterless. Another Livia is the idealised seated figure in the Torlonia Gallery, No. 64. It is of Greek sculpture, and was found in the Villa of the Gordiani on the Via Labicana. A small crown surrounds the head.<sup>2</sup> It is a copy

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Livia may generally be recognised by the very short upper lip. She had, I fancy, fine lustrous eyes, and in the cameos and intaglios this is represented by making the pupils unnaturally large—in fact, out of proportion. The slightly arched Roman nose made itself remarked only as she advanced in life.

<sup>2</sup> One would fain have information on this statue, and be assured that the head is ancient. The Torlonia statues have been sadly touched up.



FIG. 38.—LIVIA as CERES. Statue in the Louvre.

of a magnificent statue of a seated ideal figure of purest Greek work of the fourth century B.C. that adorned the Circus of Maxentius, and was found in 1824 by Duke Giovanni Torlonia, but which was without a head. This statue, No. 77 in the Torlonia Gallery, probably originated most of the seated figures of ladies that have been found at Rome.

Of almost certain authenticity is the statue of Livia in the Louvre as Ceres. In that the resemblance to her son Tiberius is unmistakable; but it represents Livia when over thirty. We have no portrait-statue that we can trust as giving us the wife of Augustus in her youthful loveliness.

For fifty-two years Livia remained at the side of Octavian as his faithful and attached wife. Tacitus has given us in his pages the estimate of her character as formed by her rival and enemies. We shall see with what justice he has so treated her.

Of her domestic and feminine virtues as wife and mother there never was any question. In the midst of a corrupt society she maintained her womanly honour immaculate from the smallest stain; that she exercised a gentle and kindly influence over Augustus is not denied; nor that her household was one of quiet sobriety and simplicity, and that her manner was courteous and gracious; nor that her husband loved her to the end of his life—as his pathetic address to her on his deathbed shows. This is the unanimous testimony of all the writers of the life of Augustus. But when we come to consider her relations towards the rival party—her action in deciding the succession to the empire—then we are shown the picture of another sort of woman altogether. This is how Dean Merivale sums up the features of her character as represented by the historians: ‘In her second home she directed all her arts to securing her position, and became, perhaps, in no long course of time, as consummate a dissembler and intriguer as Octavius himself. While, indeed, she seconded him in his efforts to cajole the Roman people, she was engaged, not less successfully, in cajoling him. Her elegant manners, in which she was reputed to exceed the narrow limits allowed by fashion and opinion to the Roman matrons, proved no less fascinating to him than her beauty. Her intellect was undoubtedly of a high order, and when her personal charms failed to enchain his roving inclinations she was content with the influence she still continued to exercise over his understanding. The sway she acquired over him in the first transports of courtship she retained without change or interruption to the day of his death.’ This is a hard judgment, and unfair. As far as we can estimate her character from her portraits—and I would take that in the Louvre as decisive,—it represents her with well-formed features and with the impress of her mind and heart on it at a ripe age. Livia was a woman without much intellect; a good woman, inclined to nervous fears, narrow and petulant, not at all a dissembler; there is nothing fixed and artificial about the mouth; it is flexible and disposed to pout. That she loved



her son Tiberius, and did all in her power to advance him as successor to Augustus, may be admitted. She had a mother's pride in him; but that she committed crimes to remove those who stood in his way requires better evidence than Roman tittle-tattle and the purposeful slander of her enemies. We shall find her coming forward again and again to do acts of kindness; and when closely looked into, every charge laid to her door, of attempted or accomplished crime, breaks down completely.

The authority for the traditional estimate of Livia is, of course, Tacitus. In the sequel we shall see what his accusations are worth.<sup>1</sup> Livia bore to Augustus no children. This was to him a grievous disappointment, as he had but one child, his daughter, Julia, by his insulted and mortally offended wife, Scribonia. This was quite as great a disappointment to Livia as it was to her husband. It was no small matter for her, who had supplanted Scribonia, to know that the child of Scribonia would continue the line of the Caesars and fill the throne, and not any of her own. No thought entered her head—at all events for many years—of her son by her first husband occupying the place of Octavian. The blood of the Caesars, of divine origin, of the founder of the dynasty, was not to be set aside.

As she bore him no children, she was obliged to submit to the continuance of the sacred Julian race through Julia; and Julia, when aged fourteen, was married to the young Marcellus, aged seventeen, son of the sister of Octavian. They were married in B.C. 25, when Augustus was aged thirty-eight. He moreover adopted Marcellus as his own son. The sister of Marcellus, Marcella, was given in marriage



FIG. 39.—LIVIA. Profile of the Head of the Statue in the Louvre.

<sup>1</sup> The writer in *Smith's Dictionary of Roman and Greek Biography* follows the usual estimate: 'She was a consummate actress, excelled in dissimulation and intrigue.' 'According to the common opinion, she did not scruple to employ foul means to remove out of the way the family of her husband.' Quite so—'common opinion,' and of what value was that, when the people had the suggestion of evil given them by the adherents of Scribonia?

to his attached friend, M. Vipsanius Agrippa. But this marriage of Marcellus and Julia was of short continuance, and was unproductive. The young husband was of delicate health; and died at the baths of Baiae, before he reached his twentieth year (B.C. 23). His youth and his amiable qualities, derived not only from his mother, but also from a worthy father, greatly esteemed in Rome, caused the sorrow for his death to be general and heartfelt.<sup>1</sup> The cause of his decease was probably decline, hastened by the cold-water cure, a panacea of his surgeon, Antonius Musa, who had shortly before tried its effects on Octavian with great success.

The disappointment to Scribonia and her party caused by this death occasioned the circulation of a whisper that Livia had made away with him. But there is one historian only who records this, Dio Cassius, and he designates it as groundless. 'It was reported,' he says, 'that Livia was guilty of the death of Marcellus because he was preferred to her own sons. But this suspicion is ill founded, as the year in which he died, as well as that which preceded it, were both of them years full of sickness, in which great numbers of men died.'<sup>2</sup> It may be added that had Livia desired to further the cause of Tiberius, and prevent Augustus being succeeded by a male line of his own blood, she could not have done better than let the feeble Marcellus live on, and Julia remain married to him, her first cousin and without children. By the death of Marcellus the young widow was at liberty to be married to a more robust husband. This was done in the same year, for Julia was at once married to Agrippa, a man much older than herself, but of strong and hearty constitution; and to him she gave in rapid succession five children, of whom three were boys, Caius Julius Caesar, Lucius Julius Caesar, and Agrippa born after his father's death. The daughters were Julia and Agrippina.

The intensity of the grief and disappointment of Octavia at the loss of her son on whom she had not only set her heart, but also her ambition, was, if not greater than that of Augustus, at all events more demonstrative and less measured. Seneca, the tutor of Nero, who must certainly have had grounds for his statement, expressly tells us that in her grief and despair Octavia 'turned to hate all mothers, and the angry passion of her sorrow was directed principally against Livia, because that now the hope and prospects that had belonged to her own son were transferred to the son of Livia.' It was but a short step from frantic

<sup>1</sup> He was delicate from his sixteenth year. Servius ad Virg. *Aen.* vi.

<sup>2</sup> Portraits of young Marcellus:—

All doubtful.

1. A bust, now broken, found in the theatre along with one of Augustus at Arles. In the Museum there.

2. An admirable bust in the Capitoline Museum. Of Greek workmanship; there is really no ground for supposing this to represent Marcellus.

3. Bust, from the Laval collection, St. Petersburg, No. 251. Much restored.

grief and disappointed rage, to make accusation against the guiltless Livia of having contrived the death of Marcellus. If the reader will look back at the face of Octavia, he will see that under all the heaviness of expression there lurks an ugly unreasoning temper.

We shall consider in due order the other charges brought against the wife of Augustus. We must now say a word or two about Julia and her new husband Agrippa.

#### IV.—JULIA.

CONCERNING the daughter of Scribonia and Augustus, the testimony of antiquity is unanimous and unfavourable. The only child of the lord of the world, educated by him with the most anxious care for her high position, she was for a long time the darling of her father through her geniality and wit; on her all his ambition rested. Then, all at once, everything was changed; she became the cause of the most inextinguishable pain and humiliation, and was cast from the summit of fortune, as the first woman of the Roman world, through her own fault and incredible folly, into the abyss of misery and misfortune, and ended her days in a prison, after having seen her three sons die, and after having survived the last hope of escape from her wretchedness.

'We are enabled,' says Stahr, 'almost to see into the heart of this woman, who, like no other about her, mirrors to us the mingled good and bad, the beauty and the hideousness, that characterised this epoch, and shows us the moral condition of the ladies of the higher Roman aristocracy.'

Julia was taken from her mother at an early age that she might be brought up under the eye of her father. This education was more homely than one might have supposed. But Augustus was a great stickler for simplicity and domestic activity. The daughter of an emperor was taught to spin and weave, and was obliged to assist her stepmother and her aunt Octavia in making the ordinary clothes for Octavian, for he made a point of wearing home-spun and home-woven clothes only. The purpose of Augustus was to bring up his child, the representative of the divine Julius, to set before the eyes of the Roman people the ideal of ancient Roman uprightness, honour, and industry. He had continually in his mouth the exhortation, 'Never say or do anything which you would not have known to all the world, and written in the daily journal.'<sup>1</sup> He was very particular, probably because of the hateful tittle-tattle of Roman society, that there should be no visits of young men to his house, at all events that they should

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, in his own diary.



FIG. 40.—JULIA. Bust in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 418.



not be admitted to the company of the ladies. Once when the imperial family were at Baiae, enjoying the sea-baths, a young nobleman called. Augustus heard of it, and wrote to reprimand him, 'You have not behaved with proper respect,' said he, 'in paying a visit to my daughter at Baiae.'

It is not a little instructive to see the manner in which Augustus endeavoured to rehabilitate pure morals in the body of Roman society, and to enforce them in his own family. In religion there could be found no authoritative divine sanction for a moral life. He cast about for some other basis on which to rear it, and the only one he could discover was antiquarian sentiment. He appealed to that: Be virtuous, because virtue was a distinguishing feature of ancient Roman society—a feeble, yielding basis, of no strength whatever where the antiquarian faculty did not exist. But he had no other; the Divine Lawgiver who was to found morality on the only solid base was then about to be born in Judaea.

To return to Julia: Unfortunately the strict supervision at home ceased when Julia, then quite a child, married Marcellus, a mere boy; she enjoyed her liberty, and not knowing where to stop, in time was in every mouth, the subject of scandal throughout Rome, and her conduct known to every one except her father, whom no one ventured to enlighten on her vagaries. After the death of Marcellus, Julia had been given to M. Vipsanius Agrippa, a worthy man—a devoted adherent of her father. It was true that Agrippa was already married to Marcella, daughter of Octavia, and niece of Augustus, but Octavia herself urged the advisability of giving Julia to Agrippa; and in order to make the marriage possible, Marcella was divorced, and shortly after united to Antonius, the son of the triumvir. This marriage with Agrippa was political. He was aged forty-two, she eighteen; but it was advisable to attach one so powerful as Agrippa to the throne; and very probably Octavia and Scribonia saw that the giddy young creature required a strong hand over her, and Agrippa was not the man to stand nonsense in a wife. A good, a just, and an honourable man, he was strict as a disciplinarian, and scrupulous that his household should be orderly.

Agrippa belonged to the Vipsanian family, of which the haughty nobles of Rome declared they had never heard. But humble though his origin was, his abilities were brilliant. He was a consummate general, which Octavian was not, and he was able with his military skill to restore the affairs of his friend when the latter by his ill address in war had brought them into jeopardy. The young Marcellus had been pert, and had offended Agrippa, who thought himself set aside for this consumptive lad. Maecenas said to Augustus: 'Take care; you have put this man so high that you must make him your son-in-law or cast him down.' This thought, and perhaps sincere love and gratitude for the rough, generous, simple-minded soldier, had moved Octavian to

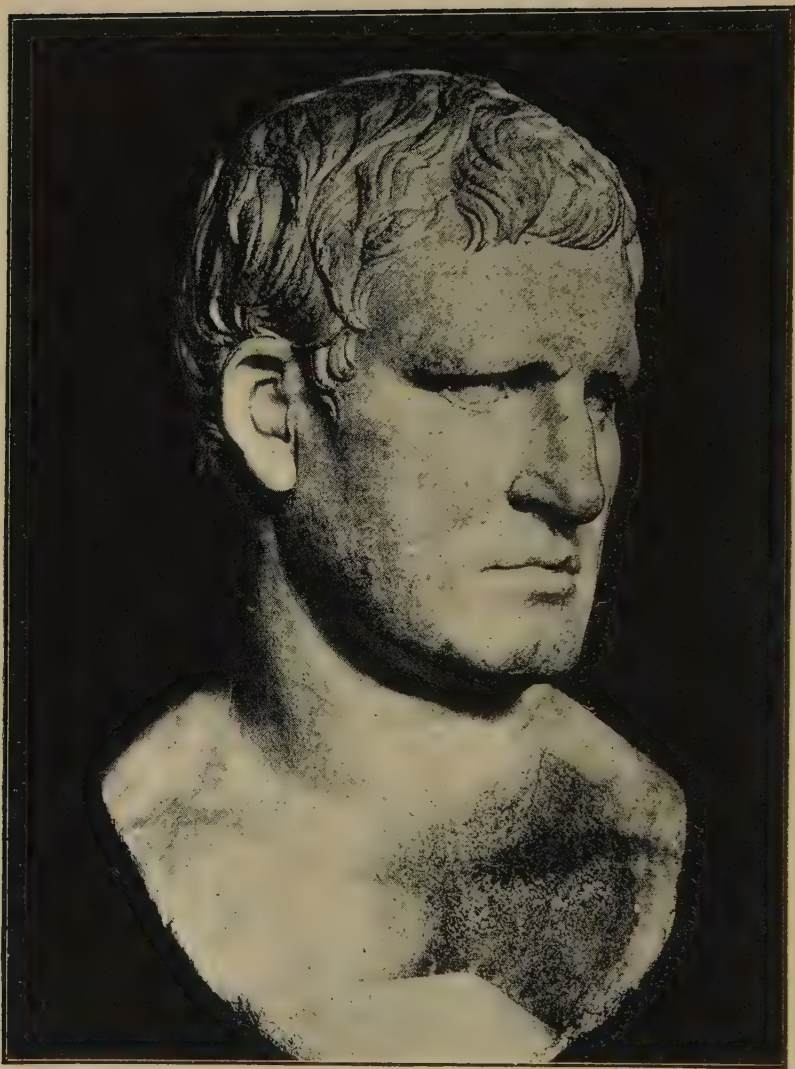


FIG. 41.—M. VIPSANIUS AGRIPPA. Bust in the Louvre; found at Gabii, 1792.

take him into his family by uniting him to his niece, and now to bind him still closer by giving him his daughter.

Few, if any, Romans were as liberal as was Agrippa with his money, and it has been a singular freak of fortune that the only public edifice of the period, or even of the later empire, that has survived to the present day undilapidated at Rome is the Pantheon, erected by Agrippa.<sup>1</sup>

Julia's second marriage lasted ten years, and this was the brightest time of her life. The wealth of her husband was great; she was courted and admired by the society of Rome; for her husband's sake, as well as her own, was popular with the lower classes. She was, if not regularly beautiful, full of animation and charm of manner that made up for lack of regularity of feature. She had humour, cleverness, love of literature and of art, and unflagging buoyancy of spirits. Even her giddiness and indifference to what the world said of her proceedings somewhat conduced to heighten the popularity she enjoyed. She made up now for the straitness and monotony of the life to which she had been condemned in childhood. Her father, who loved his only child almost to idolatry, did not attempt to control her, never doubting that this joyousness of her nature was held in check by a sound moral sense. He delighted in her freshness; he was grateful to her for giving him the long-desired heirs of Julian blood, and, no doubt, he felt that she had been required by him to make some sacrifice to political exigencies and his wishes, when she took an old soldier as her husband, old enough to be her father.

There can be little question that, apart from disparity in years, Agrippa was not the sort of husband that suited the temperament of this lively young widow. The sternness (*torvitas*) of his character is marked on his features. He was not an unkind man; he was indeed a man of a large and generous heart, and of the most tender affection, as was shown by his devotion to Octavian; but his life in the camp and with the fleet had given him a curt and imperious manner, and his restless energy was in ill accord with the *dolce far niente* of Julia. Moreover, he was obliged to be absent from his wife's side for long

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Agrippa :—

1. A fine gem in the De la Tourbie collection, Bordeaux. King, *xlvi.* 10. This is the youngest representation of him we have.

2. Several fine medals.

3. Statue at Venice representing him nude, with a dolphin at his side; Palazzo Grimani. This was found at the Pantheon in the court.

4. A splendid characteristic bust in the Louvre; the finest that exists (Fig. 41).

5. A bust in the Campo Santo, Pisa.

6. Fine bust of Luna marble, found in the Villa of the Gordiani, in the Torlonia Gallery, No. 516. Closely resembles the Louvre bust.

7. Bust, Uffizi Pal., Florence, No. 48. Also like the Louvre bust.

8. Engraved onyx, Vienna. Certainly Agrippa, though questioned by Bernoulli.

9. Cameo; obv. Agrippa with rostral crown, rev. Julia. Bib. Nat. Paris, No. 200.

periods. Only for the first year of their married life was he resident in Rome, where, as prefect of the city, he had to occupy himself in keeping order and tranquillity during the consular elections of B.C. 21, when there was such agitation of men's minds that an insurrection was feared. Next year, when Julia bore him his first son, Caius, he was obliged to depart for Gaul to encounter the Germans, who were again threatening invasion. Hardly was this task accomplished when he was summoned to Spain by a rising of the Cantabri, in the Basque range of the Pyrenees. In B.C. 19 he was back in Rome, and rather over a year later Julia presented him with her second son, Lucius. But in the summer of B.C. 17 he was ordered off to the east, where he was detained for three years. But in this case Augustus ordered Julia to follow him. She and Agrippa visited Judaea together, and were received with great splendour by Herod in Jerusalem. After that they spent some time in Asia Minor. Almost immediately on their return to Rome, Agrippa was summoned to Parthia in the depth of winter. But the old warrior was now getting past duty; he suffered from gout, and with his gout, undoubtedly his temper was not of the most amiable description. At the advice of his doctors he dipped his legs in vinegar, as hot as he could endure it; but all remedies failed, and he sickened to his death. The news of his dangerous condition reached Octavian just as he was giving some gladiatorial games to the people in the middle of March B.C. 12, in honour of his grandsons Caius and Lucius, the sons of Agrippa and Julia. He at once went into Campania, to the deathbed of his truest and best of friends, who had held to him from boyhood; but he arrived too late, the gout had reached the old soldier's stomach and had killed him. Augustus grieved for him with sincerest and most poignant sorrow. He himself pronounced over him the funeral oration in the forum, and he had his ashes laid, not in the tomb Agrippa had erected for himself, but in the family mausoleum of the Julii, which already contained the urn of the first husband of Julia, and where he himself designed to rest when life's fever was over with himself. But the haughty nobility of Rome, proud of their real or fictitious ancestry, showed signs of contempt, and prepared to refuse to attend the funeral of the great hero, who had risen from the ranks, and had no pedigree to boast of. Augustus heard their murmurs and threats, and gave a significant order that their attendance was expected, and this they did not venture to disobey.<sup>1</sup>

Julia, now in her twenty-eighth year, was again a widow; and a few months after the death of her husband she bore her third son, who was called Agrippa, after his father, and Postumus, as indicative of the period of his birth.

Augustus heard rumours of his daughter having coquetted with some

<sup>1</sup> For an admirable life of this soldier see Frandsen, *Agrippa*, Altona, 1836. Also Moltke, *Agrippa*, Gent, 1872.



of the fine gentlemen of Rome, and he knew that a lively person of her character must not be left in widowhood over long. But he hesitated for a while to whom to give her. He thought of C. Proculeius, a wealthy knight, as a husband for her; then of Cotesio, a king of the Getae; but his choice fell finally on Tiberius Nero, eldest son of his wife Livia.

There is but a single bust that can be regarded as a genuine portrait of Julia.<sup>1</sup> It is a bold, impudent face, full of good nature, but coarse. The hair is beautiful and wavy, worn in a fashion intermediate between that of Octavia (Fig. 30), and that of the Agrippinas. Psychologically the story of Julia can be read in this bold, merry face. It is the face of a woman who would pick up all the slang of the fashionables of Rome, and bandy coarse jokes with them—we know that Julia actually did make exceedingly coarse ones. One preserved, relative to herself, must be looked for in Macrobius.

But, though this shall not be quoted, another incident showing the readiness of her tongue, given by the same writer, will bear reproduction. One day she came to see her father, and sup with him, in such a lavish and splendid toilette, that he was disconcerted and offended. He said nothing; but she could see by his manner that he was put out. Next day she came to him again, but dressed soberly. Augustus could not now control his satisfaction, and said, 'How much more suitable it is that my daughter should appear in her present dress than in that which she wore yesterday.' 'Possibly,' answered Julia, with a laugh. 'But remember, to-day I am dressed to please my father, yesterday so as to please my husband.'

Another time Augustus was vexed to see, at a public exhibition of gladiatorial games, that his daughter's box was full of young exquisites, with whom she was bandying words and glances. On reaching home, Augustus wrote her a note of remonstrance, and bade her observe the difference between her own surroundings and those of Livia, about whom 'grave and reverend signiors' had congregated. Julia scribbled an answer and sent it back to her father: 'These young men will become old fogies also by the time I am an old woman.'

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Julia :—

1. A medal, Greek, with the head of Julia on the obverse, on the reverse that of Pallas.
2. Denarius of Augustus, of date 737, the year when he adopted the two sons of Agrippa and Julia. On one side head of Augustus, on the other that of Julia between those of her sons. But this is too small for identification of features.
3. Bronze medal struck at Smyrna, the head of Julia on the obverse, with legend *ΙΟΥΛΙΑΝ ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΗΝ*. On reverse, head of Livia; both heads much idealised.
4. Gem, Waterton Collection. Julia's head between those of her sons. King, xlix. E.
5. Bust in Vatican, Chiamonti, No. 418, found at Ostia in 1855 (Fig. 41). There are holes in the lobes of the ears for gold earrings.
6. Bust at Florence, eyes crooked; this bust is of an entirely different character; a sullen face. The only reason for assigning this to Julia is asymmetry of the eyes, as among the Julian family something of the sort is observable.
7. Cameo, Agrippa on one side, on the other Julia. Bibl. Nat. Paris, No. 200.

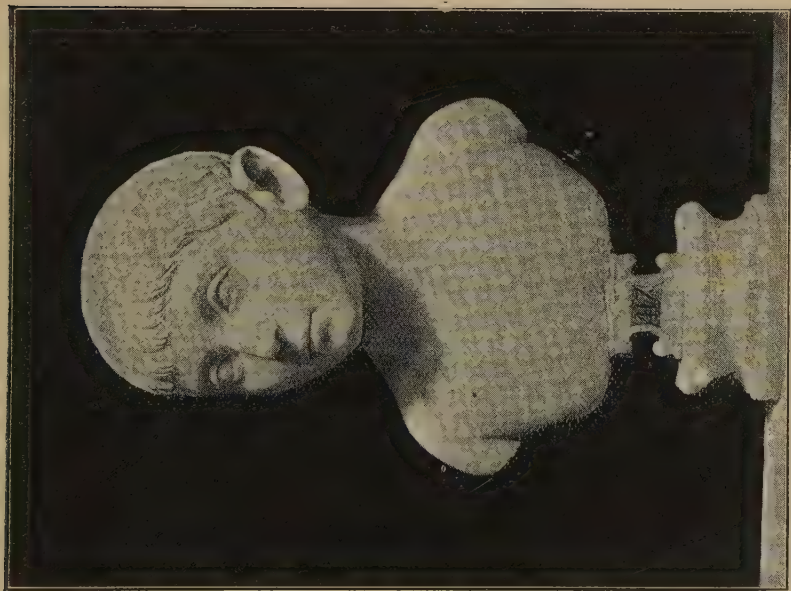
One day Augustus came into her room while her toilette was in progress—this was when she was getting into years. Her servant had been removing her grey hairs; but, surprised by the entry of the emperor, left some of the plucked-out hairs on Julia's dressing-gown. Augustus pretended not to notice this, and talked of various matters. Then suddenly, 'Julia!' said he, 'which would you rather be—grey or bald?' 'O father, bald, of course.' 'You little rogue,' answered Augustus. 'Look here!' and he held up some of the grey hairs that had been pulled out of her head.

Once when reproached because of the luxury of her table as contrasted with the simplicity of her father's, she answered haughtily, 'My father may forget that he is Caesar, but I never that I am Caesar's daughter.'

The marriage of Julia with Tiberius was an unhappy one. In the first place, in order to marry her, Tiberius was compelled by Augustus to separate from his dearly loved wife, Vipsania, a daughter born to Agrippa by his first wife; in the second place, his character was as ill disposed to agree with that of Julia as had been that of Agrippa. Moreover he knew, what was not known to Augustus, that Julia was worse than a giddy coquette. He had already had advances made to him by her, during the life of her soldier husband, which he had repelled with some disgust. This slight she never forgave, and the fact that she was capable of such conduct he never forgot. She, for her part, felt her vanity mortified, and her pride wounded, and she harboured the remembrance that he was the son of Livia, who had supplanted her own mother Scribonia, and she hated him accordingly. However, at first they lived together in seeming love, and she bore her third husband a boy, who, however, soon died. After this, mutual antipathy drove them apart.

We have in the Vatican three charming busts from the Aventine, where they were found in admirable preservation near the Church of Sta. Sabina. They represent the three sons of Julia by Agrippa, as children. To my eye there is a family likeness between the two elder and their mother, if we take the Vatican bust to be her portrait.

The heart of Augustus seemed now to have acquired all it could desire. He was undisturbed head of the world-empire of Rome. No plots were formed against him. His daughter had given him three grandsons, and there seemed to be every prospect of the Julian dynasty taking firm root. Augustus adopted the two elder boys, Caius and Lucius, and they were thus indicated as his heirs and successors. The emperor gave rich presents in gold to the soldiers in the name of Caius, who was sent along with Tiberius, when only twelve years old, in a campaign against the Sigambri, in order that he might become acquainted with military exercise. Augustus not only supervised the education of the boys, but he taught them himself, and even endeavoured to get them



FIGS. 42 AND 43.—CAIUS and LUCIUS CAESAR. Busts in the Museum Chiaramonti, Nos. 417, 419.



exactly to reproduce his own style of penmanship. The flattery to which the lads were early exposed turned their heads, and they importuned their grandfather to bestow upon them public marks of honour. He yielded so far as to allow them to be declared consuls-elect and 'princes of the youth' before they had begun '*relinquere nuces*,' 'to put away childish things.' Caius was nominated in B.C. 5, but was not to enter on the consulship till five years later. He assumed the toga virilis in the same year, and his brother three years later.<sup>1</sup>

At table, the two boys always sat with Augustus, one on each hand; and when he went a journey, he took them in the chariot with him. When Tiberius returned from his last campaign in Germany, he very soon perceived that these boys were made much more of by Augustus than he could expect to be. And when Octavian rewarded his services with the tribunician power for five years, this token of the emperor's favour served merely to delay the rupture. Tiberius was aged thirty-six, he was an experienced general, and had been the wise governor of provinces. He returned to Rome to find himself coolly received by the people, and his place in the regard of Augustus occupied by two pert urchins, who made no disguise of their contempt for the son of Livia. His wife's good name was branded by common talk, and, mortally hurt, he withdrew from Rome to Rhodes.

Julia had formed an attachment for one Sempronius Gracchus, a handsome and polished man, of noble birth and attractive manners. This intrigue had begun whilst Julia was married to Agrippa, and was continued after her marriage with Tiberius. Sempronius Gracchus, as

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Caius and Lucius Caesar :—

1. Medals, several. One with head of Augustus on one side, and that of Caius on the other. The Gonzaga medal.

2. Busts in the Vatican. Chiaramonti, Nos. 417-419; found near St. Sabina on the Aventine. They belong to this period, at which no portrait statues and busts were allowable except of persons distinguished by high office, so that children's heads are exceptional, and these almost certainly must belong to the Augustan house. There is, it seems to me, a certain family likeness in them to the Octavian race, and certainly they are brothers (Figs. 42, 43).

3. Busts at Wilton House. These are not a pair. One has the iris marked, the other has not. That called Caius turns to the right; the ears are set singularly far back in the head. The shape of the head is very much that of Tiberius, very broad, and narrowing rapidly to the chin; but this is probably due to lack of development in childhood. The ears protrude; the mouth is small. In this bust the iris of the eye is not marked. The Lucius turns somewhat to the left, and there is the asymmetry in the eyes that is often seen in the portraits of the Caesars of the Julian and Claudian houses. I have examined these carefully on the spot.

4. Two busts in the Berlin Gallery, of about the age of 12 and 14, Nos. 414 and 415; evidently brothers; both turned to the right. Bernoulli thinks they are later, and have not a marked Julian character.

5. Two busts at Madrid, very like Augustus; these I have not seen, nor have I seen photographs of them.

6. Two other busts at Madrid, with a Julian character.

7. A beautiful naked statue in the Villa Albani, No. 120. This is conjectured to be a Caius, but it is uncertain, though probable.



Tacitus tells us, left no effort untried to set her against Tiberius: 'he inspired her with disrespect and hatred towards her husband; and when she wrote letters to her father full of asperity towards Tiberius, it was believed that they had been dictated to her by Gracchus.'

The old emperor was annoyed at the departure of his son-in-law; he could not understand it, and his daughter fanned his annoyance into anger. Not only whilst Julia was a child in his own house, but also after she was married, he had regarded her as a model of womanly virtue. So much so, that when the worthy Cornelia, daughter of his former wife Sempronia by her first husband, died, he thought he could not do her greater honour than by saying 'she was worthy through her blameless life to rank with his own Julia.' Those who heard him laughed in their sleeve and did not undeceive him; afterwards some slight glimmerings of the truth reached him, during the long absence of Agrippa, and made him uneasy. He said on one occasion to a circle of intimate friends: 'I have two daughters to look after, and a delicate matter it is with both; and I have to suffer anxiety for both: the one daughter is the Republic, the other, Julia.' Tiberius had been in voluntary banishment four years, and Julia had reached her thirty-eighth year, an age at which, as Macrobius says, 'had she possessed common-sense, she would have remembered that she was on the threshold of old age,' when the aspect of affairs changed. Unfortunately her self-will and wantonness had been too long uncontrolled to be subdued by the approach of age, and sense of security had made her reckless.

On a day in February of the year B.C. 2, Augustus reached what was the culminating point of his fame and of his domestic happiness. He was aged sixty-one. The proud title of 'Father of his Country' had been decreed to him by the Senate, the knights, and the people; and this title was inscribed over his palace gates, and at the foot of the statue of himself seated in a four-horse chariot, erected in the forum by the senate. A year previous, Caius, the eldest of Julia's sons, had assumed the toga of manhood. Both princes, 'princes of the youth' of Rome, clad in silver harness, led the procession of the young men into the Field of Mars, as Caesar Augustus came to dedicate the temple of Mars the Avenger, just completed. With tender pride the aged emperor looked at his daughter, from whose fruitful womb had issued the heirs of his blood and of his dynasty. He knew that a good deal of unpleasant rumour relative to her had been circulating in the town, but he refused to believe that there was real ground for it. Julia in spite of her grey hairs was giddy, but not guilty. 'Just like her I am sure that Claudia must have looked,' said he, 'of whom our forefathers told that she was slandered. But she proved her innocence.'<sup>1</sup>

And there was some excuse for his blindness. Her good-humour, her jovial impudence of countenance—excuse the word, her portrait

<sup>1</sup> Macrobius, *Sat.* ii. 5.

suggests it—seemed to speak of lack of consideration for the proprieties of etiquette, not of moral turpitude.

Caius was to depart for the Parthian war, and the proud grandfather, in dedicating the splendid temple to the god of wars, hoped that he was assuring the protection of the god for his loved heir to the throne. Just then came the crash. How we do not exactly know; but the eyes of Octavian were opened, and he realised at once, to his unspeakable shame and grief, the utter infamy of his own flesh and blood. Sempronius Gracchus was not the only young man involved in the scandal. It is probable that Ovid the poet owed his banishment to the same cause. But there were more than two or three whose names were brought before the bowed-down emperor. He did not care to sound the depths of degradation into which he looked. As Suetonius tells us, he could bear to hear of the death of his children, but not of their disgrace. He felt that the dishonour of his daughter stained the whole house, polluted the purity of the sacred Julian blood, on which the security of the dynasty rested. But this matter could not be hushed up. He recognised the fact at once, and sent all the evidence of Julia's guilt to the senate, bidding them go into the matter thoroughly; for himself, he could not pluck up heart to appear before them.

That terrible trial was the most revolting revelation that had yet taken place of the moral turpitude eating like a cancer into the heart of Roman society. The lovers of Julia belonged for the most part to the proudest families of Rome; in the course of the inquiry such a number of scandals came to light, in which the names of great ladies were mixed up, that finally the emperor had to intervene, and request that some limits should be put to the inquiry. He would hear of no excuses for his daughter, listen to no pleading for pardon. Hiding in his humiliation in the inner chambers of his house, ashamed to let even the slaves see his face, he absolutely refused the visits of friends who would pour comfort into his wounded heart. Some one told him that Julia's freedwoman and confidante had hung herself. Caesar raised his grey head and said: 'Would God I were Phœbe's father!' But the daughter of Augustus had not the courage—or sense of shame—that Phœbe had. She thought to brazen it out; she reckoned on her father's love, on her own position. But further discoveries came to light. Behind all this wantonness was something even worse;—an intrigue between Julia and her lovers to destroy her own father, whose length of life rendered her impatient of delay, desiring to reign supreme, and rule in the name of her son Caius. Among the most deeply involved of these conspirators was Iulus Antonius, second son of Marc Antony and Fulvia—a man whose life Augustus had spared, and whom he had raised to the very highest honours, and had married to his niece Marcella, daughter of Octavia. Antonius was sentenced to execution, and the rest to banishment.

It would seem probable that the conspirators did not really draw Julia into their plot, but that they used her as their tool. Bad though she was, it is inconceivable that she should have sunk to such a depth of wickedness as to desire the assassination of her own father. It is, however, quite explicable that those in league against him should take advantage of Julia's frivolity to pay court to her for the purpose of extracting from her what information they required.

The broken-hearted father, as he wandered about his house, was heard to sigh, 'O! if my old friends Maecenas and Agrippa had been alive, this would never have happened!' and then to blame himself for having put the sifting of the wretched story into the hands of the Senate, and so given it publicity in all its odious and shame-bringing details. He refused again to see the face of his child, and bade that she should be conveyed to the volcanic islet of Pandateria in the Bay of Naples, and there be strictly guarded. He never forgave her. After his death it was discovered that her name had been scratched out from his will.

#### V.—AUGUSTUS, EMPEROR.

WE must now return for a while to Augustus and Livia in earlier and happier days.

It has been a problem set before historians, whether Octavius aimed at absolutism and worked for that end from the outstart of his career, or whether the greatness was thrust upon him. Most men have chosen the easier solution, which explained everything readily: Octavius aimed at sovereignty; and his conduct in refusing certain powers offered him, his patient continuance in partnership with Antony and Lepidus, were all due to dissimulation of his real purpose, till it suited his grown powers to declare himself ready to accept everything and to crush every one who aspired to share the sovereignty. But it appears to me that this is a very mistaken view of Augustus, and that Dean Merivale is much nearer the truth when he says: 'The young Octavius commenced his career as a narrow-minded aspirant for material power. But his intellect expanded with his fortunes, and his soul grew with his intellect. With the world at his feet, he began to conceive the real grandeur of his position; he learnt to comprehend the manifold variety of the interests subjected to him; he rose to a sense of the awful mission imposed upon him.' He groped his way. At first he sought to secure the property of his great uncle, and some position of dignity and safety. He aspired to a consulship and the command of legions in a province. The world was wide, so he and Antony and Lepidus divided it between them. Lepidus soon proved his incapacity; and when, jealous of the great name and place his fellow-triumvirs had won, he seized on Sicily, there was no help for it—Octavian was forced to put his foot on his



FIG. 44.—AUGUSTUS. Statue at Berlin (Royal Museum, No. 343).



neck. But he showed no desire to quarrel with Antony. At the very last, when he was in Alexandria, he produced the correspondence that had passed between him and his rival to show how anxious he had been, by concession, to retain the good-will of Antony, and by advice to draw him from his suicidal conduct in allowing Cleopatra to mould a policy that was distinctly anti-patriotic.

When the civil war was concluded, Octavian looked about him and found himself alone. There was no man of distinction to raise his hand to oppose him. With the overthrow of Sextus, the Pompeian faction was extinguished; the death of Antony had left his party—if any party remained—dispirited. Lepidus was but a shadow, devoid of substance. The victorious party acknowledged no divided interests. The nobility were depressed and decimated; the people had lost independence. Rome, Italy, the whole world, longed for—cried out for—peace, and forced the survivor of the civil tumults to take the place of prince of the commonwealth. The city was weary of bloodshed, Italy of confiscation and consignment of lands to soldiers. The provinces, tortured under the old rule of the senate and people, trusted that one man, gathering into his hands supreme authority, would check the rapacity of local governors. Thus Octavian found power, position, empire, thrust on him from every side.

Dio Cassius tells us of a debate between Octavian and his confidential friends, Agrippa and Maecenas. The elaborate harangues put into the mouths of the debaters are due, in the form presented to us, to the embroidery of the historian's fancy; but certainly he embroidered on a substratum of fact. And, indeed, this discussion is in complete accord with what I venture to think was the condition of the mind of Octavian at the time. He was virtually master of the commonwealth, but the fate of his uncle made him shrink from the assumption of supreme power. The old republican, or rather oligarchical, constitution was dead—past possibility of being revived. What was to be done? The result of the conference was that Octavian undertook, with the help of his friends, to reorganise the constitution on clearly defined and practical lines.

One cannot see what else could be done. If Octavian had not taken the lead, the people, determined on having a chief ruler, whom they regarded as the pledge of public tranquillity, would have forced the place on Agrippa. Offices were heaped upon Augustus, to be held for long years. The people were ashamed of the annual elections, that had led to bribery of the worst and most widespread character, and had given them officers selling themselves so as to recoup their outlay in buying the votes that raised them to their offices. The downright good sense of the masses spoke out. They resigned the advantages of yearly bribery for the sake of having one master who would rule for the public interest and not for party ends.

In B.C. 27, when aged thirty-six, Augustus offered to resign the extraordinary powers he had held as triumvir, and which were irregular and extra-constitutional, so that his authority might be re-established on a legal basis, if the commonwealth would have it so ; otherwise let the old constitution be restored. Every public enemy had been subdued, every province secured, every ally satisfied, and every citizen contented. He therefore intimated his readiness to resign his trust into the hands of the commonwealth. This has been generally regarded as the enacting of a solemn farce. But why so? Sulla had resigned his dictatorship. Octavian had very simple tastes ; the burden of government was great ; power would not be lost to him if he did give up the conspicuous position that had been forced on him. But the Romans would not hear of this ; they had enjoyed tranquillity unparalleled for many years, the factions had sunk into silence, order was restored in the streets, decorum in the senate. A new spirit of honour in the discharge of office was making itself manifest. Were Octavian to withdraw his hand from the rudder, the ship of the state would be tossed in every direction, and be cast on the breakers. Civil war would ensue, and end in some adventurous general conquering Rome for himself, and then subdividing Italian soil once more among his soldiers, and cutting off the men of means, knights and nobles alike, so as to get hold of their lands, their palaces, and their money-bags. With one voice the senate, terrified at the prospect opened before their eyes—each man fearing for his own throat and his own coffer—entreated Octavian to retain the powers with which they had invested him for their benefit. And the people were as loud in their insistence.

On his part there had been real weariness of the tension of government, real desire for rest ; possibly transitory, but real at the time. Before the loudly expressed conviction of the people and senate that the work he had begun must be accomplished by him, he bowed, and resumed the task. It was then that he assumed the title of Augustus—13th January B.C. 27. He at once started for a survey of the provinces, to understand their needs, and to take measures for the equitable administration of these provinces.

The constitution of the Principate dates from this time. Augustus claimed to have restored to the Republic the powers he had previously usurped.<sup>1</sup> He did this, but only to receive them back again in more formal and legal and unassailable fashion.

The house first occupied by Augustus was that in which he first saw the light, on the Palatine, that had belonged to his father Octavius. Thence he removed later to the larger dwelling that had belonged to the orator Hortensius, on the same hill, and there abode till it was

<sup>1</sup> 'Rempubicam ex mea potestate in senat(us) populique Romani arbitrium transtuli.'  
—*Mon. Ancyr.* vi. 13.



FIG. 45.—AUGUSTUS. Bust in the British Museum.

destroyed by fire in B.C. 6. He was then aged fifty-seven. The house was rebuilt on a larger scale by the citizens. A subscription was got up for it, and so eager were the citizens to subscribe, and so numerous were the contributors, that Augustus refused to allow any of the subscribers to give more than one denarius. The site is now covered by the gardens of the Villa Mills with its magnificent cypresses, and all that can be seen of it are the substructures.

But although the palace of Augustus was built by the public in grateful acknowledgment of the benefits they had acquired under his rule, it was by no means a sumptuous building. When his daughter Julia erected a palace of too extravagant magnificence, he was offended and ordered it to be demolished.

The columns that formed the peristyle of his house were not of marble, nor even of travertine, but of the coarse, common *peperino*. The house commanded the circus, and had a southern aspect, as Augustus suffered from the cold winters in Rome, but did not like to leave it. The entrance was on the north, where was the colonnade and a fountain. Over the modest door hung, rustling in the wind, an old withered civic crown of oak-leaves, of which he was vastly proud, for this civic crown was decreed to such as had saved the lives of Roman citizens. The fact of his cherishing this decoration goes far to show that Octavius was guiltless of the blood that was shed in the proscription, or had done his utmost to restrain his colleagues from taking lives as well as estates. On each side of his doorway grew a laurel, which was the decoration of the Regia, or high priest's house in the forum. On the top of the house was a snugger, into which he retired when he wanted to be entirely alone, and this he called his Syracuse, or workshop. For forty years he occupied one small bedroom, in summer always sleeping with his door open. His furniture was of the plainest description: 'hardly fit for a gentleman's house nowadays,' says Suetonius, writing under the Flavian emperors. He had a good library, in which were the busts and statues of illustrious men; amongst others, in good taste, that of Hortensius, whose house this had been.

It happens that, though the house of Augustus, now buried under the gardens of a convent, has not been explored, we can see two houses that were inhabited by Livia. One is that which belonged to her first husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, to which she retired in her old age and widowhood. The other is her summer villa, about four miles from Rome, at Torre de Prima Porta. Both have been exhumed, and exhibit not only the construction of a Roman house of the period, but also give us some insight into the private life of Livia. Both houses are of the most modest proportions. That on the Palatine consists of an atrium, sunk some steps below the level of the ground, for the sake of coolness, out of which open, opposite the entrance, three little sitting-rooms, the central tablinum and two subsidiary rooms, divided from



the atrium by a step, opening out of it by arches closed at will by curtains. To the right of the atrium a door gives access to a little dining-room, over the door of which is painted a glass containing flowers—roses, tulips, and anemones. The tablinum and side alcoves are also adorned with frescoes, very charming, representing mythological scenes; that on the right has an exquisite border, painted with the delicacy of a miniature, of scenes of country and village life. Behind these state apartments are the slaves' rooms and their court, the kitchens, store-chambers, and offices. The whole is on a wonderfully small scale; the decorations delicate, refined, and impressing one with the idea that the lady of the house was distinctly a *lady* in mind and in tastes.

It is even more so at Torre de Prima Porta.

On the top of a hill that dominates the Tiber and the Campagna, and commands a glorious view of the Alban and Sabine hills, the summer residence of Livia has been unearthed. The little atrium, the hall, the centre of the life of the house, measures sixteen paces long by eight wide. This also is sunk twenty-five feet below the surface, and received light from above. It probably had a vaulted roof open at the ends. Nothing can be imagined more quaintly charming than the fresco decoration of this little hall. The walls are painted to look like a shrubbery, and the hall itself is supposed to be a parterre in the midst of a grove. To carry out this delusion, round the base of the wall is drawn a little light railing. Beyond this is painted the sward, and then a wall of open tile-work. But this wall forms bays at each side and at each end, and in every bay is planted a young fir-tree; and in the sward, all round the room, are flowers of various sorts—a cactus, roses, anemones, etc. Behind the wall is a perspective of trees, a forest glade of silvery olives and glossy-leaved pomegranates, with here and there a poplar shooting aloft. The pomegranates are in fruit. There are arbutus bushes with yellow berries leaning over the wall, white roses straggling, here and there a tall scarlet anemone thrusting its head into sight above the breasting of the wall. Among the trees birds are flying. They are playing with each other; they are picking at the fruit; they are perched on the extreme leading shoots of poplars, singing. Nothing can be imagined more graceful, more fresh and innocent. The colouring, the atmospheric effect of the more distant trees, the delicacy of drawing, the pleasant fancy displayed, and the passionate admiration of nature shown in this beautiful little hall, are a revelation. One knew that the Romans admired sculpture, and loved to paint human figures; but this is landscape of the simplest description, and it is most admirable in execution. Nothing better could be done to-day.

In this villa was found the statue of Octavian, now in the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican (Fig. 46);—one of the best portraits of Augustus that we have; and it has this special interest attaching to it, that it was



FIG. 46.—AUGUSTUS. Statue found in Livia's Villa at Prima Porta  
Vatican Museum, Nuovo Braccio, No. 14.

the likeness which Livia thought best, and kept to look at every day in her own little country-house. On this statue M. Mayor remarks: 'It is very fine, whether looked at from an artistic or an anthropological point of view. Observe how softened is the physiognomy. The contest is over. Octavian is triumphant. Remark also the raised corners of the mouth, forming a *rictus* that is found again in Caligula. Approximate age, 36 years.'

A few years younger is the statue at Berlin in Pentelic marble, which came from the Richelieu collection, and thence passed to the Pourtalès. The head is not of the same marble as the trunk. The right arm and right leg and left foot are restorations.<sup>1</sup> In this latter the brows are still knit with thought and care; in the former there is repose—that repose which came over the face of Augustus as he began to see that a superior Power was shaping his destiny and was protecting him.

No man was perhaps more surprised and perplexed than himself at the manner in which every opponent had given way before him, every obstruction in his way to supreme power had been removed; in which senate and people had clung to his toga and implored him to accept the supremacy they offered him as their sole guarantee against civil war, murder, and spoliation. He knew that he was no general. He had in the field met with humiliating disaster that had been retrieved only by the address of Agrippa. The fact that his position, his despotic power, had been forced on him, filled him with the belief in something like a Providence watching over him. Perhaps he thought that the divinity of Rome was his own divinity also. The nations proclaimed him a deity, and he accepted the adulation, because he thought there was some truth in it: not that he, personally, was superhuman, but that he was the organ of divinity saving Rome from rottenness and ruin, and bringing peace and prosperity to a weary and bleeding world. He honoured the gods with genuine devotion, refusing to accept the sums which it was the fashion to subscribe for the erection of statues of himself, and directing that they should be applied instead to the glory of the national divinities.

One singular practice he adopted in or about B.C. 9, when he was aged 54 years. He seated himself one day in each year, in the guise of a mendicant, at his own palace gate, and accepted the petty coins cast him by passers-by. The reason for this self-abasement is not given, but we are probably not wrong in ascribing it to a similar feeling to that which prompted Julius Caesar to ascend the steps to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on his knees—voluntary humiliation to deprecate the wrath of the gods, who might strike him down were he not to acknowledge their supremacy.

<sup>1</sup> The green basalt bust in the Berlin Museum is not a genuine antique, and it is characterless.





and intent on exacting all he could from the provincials. The charge of avarice had been brought against him previously in Gaul. Now, screened by the presence of the emperor's grandson and heir to his throne, Lollius is said to have carried on his exactions with unblushing effrontery. It was pretended that he had even betrayed the plans of the Romans to their enemies, the Parthians. But as these accusations were brought against him by those who fawned on and flattered the young prince, who was himself impatient of the restraint imposed on him by his tutor, it is quite possible that they may have been trumped up in order to destroy him. Lollius died—he is said to have poisoned himself; and then the young Caius was left to the machinations of the sycophants about him, without a warning voice to restrain him and moderate his pride.

In A.D. 3, Caius received a wound, dealt treacherously after capitulation, under the walls of Artagera, and from the effects of this injury his constitution, never perhaps very strong, was impaired. He became inert, indifferent to his duties, and weary of office. He wrote to his grandfather to entreat him not to recall him to Rome, but to suffer him to remain in Syria, and during his illness to be exempted from all official responsibilities and cares. Augustus was disappointed and vexed. However, he yielded, and the sickly youth retired to Limyra, in Lycia, where his mind appears to have become affected, and finally he succumbed, just eighteen months after the death of his brother at Marseilles.

The removal of these grandsons of Augustus opened the way for the sons of Livia too obviously for the disappointed and dismayed Scribonian faction not at once to spread rumours that the youths had been removed by poison. The historian Velleius Paterculus was in Asia in the campaign of Caius, and his account of the sickness leaves us in little doubt that it was due to the wound he had received from the Armenian, that had injured some vital organ. The charge against Livia of having obtained the death of the two brothers comes to us from Dio as a piece of gossip. He says: 'Livia was suspected of having occasioned both these deaths, because about this time Tiberius was recalled from Rhodes.' Another writer who allows a suspicion to rest on these deaths as not in the course of nature is Pliny—some seventy years after the affair: he, however, merely says that among the sorrows that oppressed the heart of Augustus were the 'suspicious deaths of his children, which caused him not only grief at his loss, but also occasioned other sorrows.'

Tacitus speaks twice of the decease of the two young princes. In the first place he says: 'After the decease of Agrippa, these princes were cut off, *either* by a death premature but natural, *or* by the arts of their stepmother Livia; Lucius, on his journey to the armies in Spain, Caius on his return from Armenia, ill of a wound.' In the second passage Tacitus does not admit the doubt. He is writing about the death

of Julia, who in her decline of life was kindly assisted by Livia, 'who, says he, 'having by secret devices overthrown her stepchildren in their prosperity, made an open show of compassion towards them in their adversity.' Suetonius makes no allusion to suspicion of murder. Florus says: 'Both died early, with this difference, that one, Lucius, died without having acquired any fame, at Massilia, of a sickness, whereas Caius died in Syria of the results of a wound he had received in the reconquest of Armenia.'

Surely it would be monstrous to consider Livia as guilty of these two deaths. The boys had been with her in the house from infancy, and when there were cared for, and were well. They go abroad; and when far away from her care one falls sick and dies; the other receives a wound from which he never properly recovers, and gradually wastes away. There is absolutely no evidence for incriminating her.

Fortunately we have preserved for us one of the letters that Augustus wrote to Caius, and it gives us a pleasant peep into the family life of the imperial household. The letter was written on the sixty-fourth birthday of Augustus, to Caius after he had left Rome for the East. It runs thus: 'Salutations to thee, my dearest Caius, the apple of my eye, whom I sincerely and continuously desire when you are absent from me, but chiefly on such a day as this do my eyes wander in search of my own Caius. But be you where you may on this day, I hope you have cheerfully and heartily celebrated my sixty-fourth birthday. For, as you see, I have passed over that treacherous period for old folk, the sixty-third year. Now I pray the gods to grant me so to pass the rest of my life, that I may have you preserved to me, and the State may remain in the same prosperous condition as heretofore; and that, growing in capacity and ability, you may be prepared in course of time to take my place.' There remained now to Augustus but a single grandson, Agrippa Postumus, a different sort of boy from his brothers, and one who had given his grandfather much trouble. The old emperor had adopted him, as he had already adopted Livia's eldest son, Tiberius, now returned from Rhodes, where he had spent seven years. This adoption of Tiberius and Agrippa took place on June 27, A.D. 4. In the following year Agrippa assumed the toga virilis. Livia was now at the culminating point of her power. The three women who had formed a party against her were removed. Octavia, sister of Augustus, was dead, his daughter Julia was in banishment, and Julia's mother Scribonia went voluntarily with her daughter into that banishment. Before very long the same fate that had befallen Julia befell her daughter, who had inherited her mother's laxity of principle as well as her name. Livia saw her son adopted by the emperor and virtually designated as his successor; and she saw how the excellent and business-like qualities of Tiberius were winning for him the respect if not the love of Augustus. Her own future was assured in that of her son. The aged emperor

bowed down by so many blows of fortune in his own family, found happiness in the love of Livia and in the dutiful attention of Tiberius. And he needed this all the more because of the uneasiness caused him by the conduct of Agrippa Postumus, the only surviving male representative of his blood.

This ill-disposed boy<sup>1</sup> was 'a thorough Lazzarone, in the style of King Ferdinand I., the Lazzarone king of Naples.'<sup>2</sup> His favourite pursuit was fishing, and he assumed the attributes of Neptune. His unusual strength, and the wild explosions of insensate fury into which he burst at the least contradiction, served only to heighten the brutality of his conduct. 'He plunged into profligacy with extraordinary depravity of mind and feeling,' says Velleius Paterculus, 'and thus alienated the affections of his grandfather, and father by adoption.' 'Agrippa,' says Suetonius, 'was intractable. His folly increased from day to day.' Upon any mention of him and of the two Julias, the old emperor would sigh deeply, and quote a line from the Iliad, 'Would I were wifeless, or had childless died!' He would speak of them as the three cancers in his family. Every attempt failed to bring Agrippa into taking a share in the conduct of the State. He would not enter on any office; he broke forth into the rudest and coarsest abuse of his grandfather and of Livia. His presence in Rome brought discredit on the Caesarian house, and Augustus obtained from the senate a decree banishing him to the islet of Planasia, near Elba.

About the same time, Julia, his granddaughter, as already said, gave him trouble. She had been married to L. Aemilius Paullus, by whom she became the mother of M. Aemilius Lepidus, and of Aemilia, the first wife of Claudius, afterwards emperor. She had entered into criminal intercourse with Decimus Silanus. She was banished accordingly to the little island of Trimerus (A.D. 9).



FIG. 47.  
AGRIPPA  
POSTUMUS.  
Medal struck at  
Corinth.

#### VII.—THE SONS OF LIVIA.

THERE was now no one left between Tiberius and the throne, and Livia might hope to see herself the mother as well as the wife of an emperor, and to see the Claudian house supplant that of Julius.

Her life with Augustus had been happy. He had been first won by

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Agrippa Postumus :—

1. Bronze medal of Corinth (Fig. 47).

2. Another bronze medal of Corinth (Fig. 57).

3. Bust in Vatican Museum, Chiaramonti No. 423, found along with those of Caius and Lucius Caesar on the Aventine, near the church of Ss. Sabina. I do not understand what Bernoulli means when he speaks of the head as having a downy beard. It has, though representing a child, a truculent look, and something of the frown in the brow of Agrippa. The head is that of a child of three years old.

<sup>2</sup> Stahr, *Tiberius*, p. 51.

her singular though somewhat childish beauty; but her domestic virtues, her amiable character, her cleverness, and the tact with which she dealt with him, overlooking his weaknesses, enchained him to her long after her beauty had faded. Tacitus speaks of her 'easy and indulgent nature, well adapted to the fastidious and complex character of her husband.' When an intimate friend once asked her the secret of her power—so gossip said (*ut ferunt*)—she replied, 'For my part I always remained within the bounds of moderation and honour; I always cheerfully did whatever he desired; I never meddled in any of his affairs, even in those of the heart, which neither made me show jealousy nor give token that I perceived cause for it.' This is reported by Dio Cassius about two hundred years later, and must be accepted for what it is worth. It is probably a reason given by others for the hold maintained by Livia over the affections of Augustus, and to give it more point it has been put into her mouth.

Tacitus, in giving a summary of Livia's character after her death, says: 'In her domestic conduct she was formed after the model of primitive sanctity; but she showed more affability than was suffered to the matrons of early times.' Ovid calls her 'The Vesta of chaste matrons.' One day as she went abroad she was met by a train of men, naked, perhaps gladiators in training. When Augustus heard of this he was very indignant and threatened the men with death, but Livia excused them, saying, 'To the eyes of honest women, what are they but a row of statues!'

The power she exerted over Augustus was often for good, serving to mitigate his anger and blunt the severity of his justice. An instance was the case of Cnaeus Cornelius Cinna, when he had formed a plot for the assassination of Augustus, a plot disclosed to the emperor. Cinna was a son of Faustus Sulla by a daughter of the great Pompeius, and so may be said to have borne an hereditary grudge against the Julian house.



FIG. 48.—LIVIA.  
Sardonyx at  
St. Petersburg.

'Proud of his descent, and oblivious of the favours he had received at the hands of Augustus, who had made his descent no bar to his advancement, he was vain enough to imagine that he could himself wield the powers of the empire, and that the old nobility would acquiesce in his supremacy. One of his accomplices, however, disclosed to the emperor his design to surprise him in the act of sacrificing, and slay him at the foot of the altar. Time was when Augustus would have rushed impetuously to punish such an attempt in a paroxysm of fear or anger. But these passions had now cooled down; he could reason calmly with himself; he could take deliberate counsel with his advisers how best to baffle designs which neither the certainty nor the severity of punishment had hitherto



availed to repress. The Romans ascribed to Livia the merit of persuading him that mercy was also policy. A remarkable scene followed, when the chief criminal was yet unconscious that his plot was detected. Augustus summoned him into his cabinet, and ordered a chair to be set for him by the side of his own; and then, desiring not to be interrupted, proceeded to deliver a discourse, which, according to his custom in matters of importance, he had already prepared, and perhaps committed to writing.<sup>1</sup> He reminded his uneasy auditor of the grace he had bestowed upon him, though a political enemy and the son of an enemy; he had granted him life, he had enriched and distinguished him. He had raised him to the honour of the priesthood, over more than one competitor from the ranks of the Caesarians themselves. 'After all these favours,' he continued, 'how could you plot to take away my life?' Cinna could keep silence no longer; he vehemently disclaimed the horrid imputation. 'You promised not to interrupt me,' rejoined Augustus, and proceeded calmly with his harangue, unfolding all the details of the conspiracy, and finally asking what end the traitor could have proposed to himself. 'Be assured,' he added, 'it is not myself alone who stands in your way, if such be your ambition: neither the Paulli, nor the Cossi, the Fabii nor the Servilii, would suffer you to assume dominion over them.' Thus did he continue for more than two hours to pour forth his premeditated argument before he arrived at the unexpected conclusion, in which he assured the culprit, not of forgiveness only, but of renewed favour. 'Let this,' he said, 'be the commencement of friendship and confidence between us.' Shortly afterwards he conferred on him the consulship, and found him ever afterwards a grateful and sincere adherent.<sup>2</sup>

Ampère disputes the story as mere fable, though we have it on double authority. But it bears on its front the characteristics of truth. There are small details in the speech of Augustus, as an allusion to a trial between Cinna and a freedman, recently concluded adversely to Cinna, that could hardly have crept in had the speech been the invention of Seneca.

Augustus would bear to have his anger allayed by others besides Livia. Once when greatly incensed, and disposed to severe measures, Maecenas scribbled on his tablets: 'Gird for your work, butcher!' and sent it to the emperor, who at once submitted to the reprimand.

This is not an unsuitable place for a few words relative to this tried and loved friend of Augustus. Unlike Agrippa, he was sprung from noble ancestors. Indeed, the Cilnii, his paternal ancestors, were of the

<sup>1</sup> Almost certainly so. 'In his intercourse with individuals, even with his wife Livia, upon subjects of importance, he wrote on tablets all he wished to express, lest, if he spoke *ex tempore*, he should say more or less than was proper.'—(Suetonius.) This accounts for the preservation of the details. Moreover, a daily journal was kept by Augustus of all transactions, public and domestic.

<sup>2</sup> Merivale, *Hist. Rom.* iv. 292.

the royal house of Arretium ; they, as well as the Maecenates, being of Etruscan origin. Maecenas was a good deal older than Octavian, and it is possible that their first acquaintance originated through Octavian being placed under him as pupil. We know his birthday (the 15th April), but unfortunately neither the year nor the place when and where he saw the light. He flattered himself that he was descended from Porsenna, and the story told in the family was that the Cilnii were expelled from their native town because they had become so wealthy and powerful as to excite the jealousy of their fellow-citizens.

No ancient writer has given us a biography of this great patron of letters and arts, and his life can be gleaned only from scattered notices. So great was the reliance placed on him by Augustus, that at one time he was empowered along with Agrippa to open all the letters addressed by Augustus to the senate, and to alter their contents so far as in their judgment the posture of affairs required.

At one time an estrangement occurred between him and his illustrious patron, the cause of which is not clearly known. Dio Cassius says that it was due to an intrigue carried on by Augustus with Terentia, the wife of Maecenas, and the same historian also states that Augustus went into Gaul, B.C. 16, so as to be able to enjoy the society of Terentia there, unmolested by the lampoons to which his liking for her gave rise in Rome. But the authority of so late a historian when it relates to scandal is of little value.

Maecenas possessed magnificent gardens on the Esquiline Hill, on a site that had been an old burial-place for slaves and poor folk ; and in this residence he spent the greater part of his time, and there received the learned and literary men of Rome. In the society he entertained he was not very select, and it was probably on this account that Augustus spoke somewhat disparagingly of his suppers as those of parasites. But he was a man of a reserved disposition, and knew perfectly how to draw a line between intimate friends and literary acquaintances. His domestic relations were not harmonious ; he was a man terribly henpecked, by that same Terentia who was supposed to have had an amour with Augustus. He and Terentia were for ever quarrelling, separating, and patching up their differences. Popular gossip said of Maecenas that he was married a thousand times, but always to the same woman. Augustus was once vexed at her having wormed a state secret out of the uxorious minister, and called him sharply to order as a chatterbox.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Maecenas :—

1. A gem, amethyst, Bibl. Nation. Paris, No. 2057.

2. A gem, red jasper, Bibl. Nation. Paris, No. 2058.

3. A gem, cornelian, Naples.

4. The bust in the Capitol, commonly called Cicero, most certainly is not Cicero ; it has been with much reason supposed by Visconti to be Maecenas. Stanza de Filosofi, No. 75.

5. A bust, Torlonia Gallery, No. 515 ; found at Caffarella in 1878.

6. Colossal bust in Capitoline Museum. Found on the Via Flaminia, near Narni.

To return to the domestic life of Augustus and Livia. As already said, he made a point of wearing as his ordinary apparel garments spun, woven and fashioned by Livia and his household. He was delicate, and suffered from colds in his head and loss of voice, and Livia took care of his health. She accompanied him wherever he went, sat at his side when he visited the circus and theatre, and was with him on his travels. When separated from each other, they kept up constant communication with one another by letter or verbal messages. We possess fragments of some of these letters relative to the young Claudius, her grandson, the child of her second son Drusus, that shall be quoted later when we come to this emperor.

Caligula, the grandson of Julia, who had no love for Livia, but had learned to respect her, was wont to call her 'Ulysses in petticoats,' an indirect acknowledgment of her calm judgment and prudence. And judgment and prudence were needed in that family, torn by rivalries, in order that she might meet or circumvent all the intrigues entered into against her and her sons during half a century. But she possessed for this task two qualities, the like of those with which Octavian himself was endowed—great self-control and moderation. She had her sorrows to bear as well as her husband, and a bitter blow to her was the death of Drusus, her younger son and her darling.

Nero Claudius Drusus was born shortly after the marriage of Livia with Octavian. His maternal grandfather having been adopted by a Livius Drusus, he became legally one of the representatives of the Drusian family of the Livian gens, although none of its blood flowed in his veins.<sup>1</sup>

Among the portraits of the elder Drusus that remain, all bear a family likeness to Tiberius and to Livia. The face reappears in the younger Drusus, who was extraordinarily like his uncle, and in his own son Claudius. It is a pleasant face, frank, intelligent, and firm; with far more strength in it than that of Tiberius, without his refinement

1 Portraits of the elder Drusus:—

1. Silver medal; head crowned with laurels.
  2. Large bronze; head uncrowned. Rev. A man among arms.
  3. Large bronze; head uncrowned. Rev. Spes.
  4. Restored medal by Claudius, heads of Drusus and Antonia.
  5. Statue, Naples, from Pompeii, half nude. Very fine (Fig. 49).
  6. Bust, belt and chlamys over shoulder. Torlonia Gallery, No. 520 (called in catalogue erroneously Drusus Minor), found at Anzeo (Fig. 50).
  7. Draped bust, Florence; nose and upper lip and chin repaired.
  8. Bust, Lateran Museum, No. 438. Good.
  9. Bust, Capitoline Museum, Stanza degli Imperatori, No. 6. Nose and ear repaired.
- Older than in the other busts, the resemblance of the lines of face about mouth to Claudius is striking. But this is probably Claudius and not Drusus.
10. Engraved gem at Turin, Bernoulli xxvi. 11.
  11. Bronze statue found at Herculaneum, Naples Museum.
  12. Sandstone bust found at Vaison, in Avignon Museum; nose broken. Doubtful.
  13. Bust at Schloss Erbach.



FIG. 49.—DRUSUS MAJOR. Statue in the Museo Nazionale, Naples.  
Found at Pompeii in 1821.



and delicacy of feature, and also without his nervous sensitiveness. With the people of Rome he was more popular than the reserved Tiberius. In all his conduct he showed his high breeding by a courtesy of manner and modesty exceptional in the Claudian family. He possessed in a high degree the charm of manner that springs out of a kindly heart, and great evenness of temper, so that his friends never complained of variations in his attachment or behaviour to them. It was not to be wondered at that he was not only the darling of his mother, but that Octavian himself entertained for him a very warm and fatherly regard. Partly on this account, and partly on account of the precipitancy of the marriage of Augustus with Livia three months prior to his birth, it was supposed that Augustus was more to him than step-father. There is, however, as already remarked, nothing in his face, and there is nothing either in those of his two sons, that suggests the features of Octavian.

It was supposed that he was inclined to favour the restoration of the old constitution, and those who regretted the opportunities of doing wrong, of plundering, and taking bribes, opportunities that the old constitution had favoured, as a dung-heap favours the growth of toadstools, looked to Drusus as a champion of what they were pleased to call their liberties. Suetonius says that he wrote a letter to Tiberius relative to the re-establishment of the republic, and that Tiberius showed it to Augustus. In the domestic relations of life the conduct of Drusus was irreproachable. He had married Antonia,<sup>1</sup> the daughter of Marc Antony, the triumvir. Marc Antony had two daughters of the same name; in all probability the wife of Drusus was the daughter of the triumvir by Octavia. Their mutual attachment was unusually fond and enduring,

<sup>1</sup> Portraits of Antonia :—

1. Statue in Louvre. Very fine (Fig. 51).
2. Bust, Florence, about 25 years old.
3. Bust, Vatican, Chiaramonti, No. 701, aged about 36 (Fig. 84).
4. Statue, Naples, from the Farnese collection, aged about 45.
5. Statue, Vatican, Nuovo Braccio, No. 77; in somewhat the same attitude; a ring on the ring finger.
6. Bust, Vatican, Chiaramonti, No. 575.
7. Bust, Vatican, Chiaramonti, 653A. A very fine bust, 'One of the best of her,' says Ampère.
8. Statue in Louvre, aged 45 (Fig. 91).
9. Medal, crowned with corn, in gold and in silver.
10. Another, veiled, 2nd Brass.
11. Another, veiled; on the reverse, the head of Caligula.
12. Another, on reverse two cornucopias.
13. Another, Cohen, i. 136. 6; on obverse, head uncovered and unadorned; inscription, Antonia Augusta.
14. Bust, still retaining its polish, Greek marble, Capitoline Museum. Sala delle Colombe, No. 21.
15. Bust, crowned with flowers, Greek marble, Capitoline Museum. Stanza degli Imperatori, No. 8.
16. Onyx, engraved, full face, Bibl. Nat. Paris, No. 206.
17. Bust, Wilton House; a good head, almost certainly correctly named.

and the unsullied fidelity of Drusus was never doubted. It is finely referred to by *Pedo Albinovanus*, Ovid's friend, in his elegy addressed to *Livia* on her son's death—

‘O honest love, in him alone and lasting !  
O blessed rest, to him with labour weary !’

By *Antonia* he had three children that lived—*Germanicus*, *Claudius* and *Livilla*.

It was not in those times allowed a prince to kick his heels in Rome. He was sent to the stern discipline of the camp to learn to endure hardship, and the not less difficult acquirement, the art to rule. *Tiberius* and *Drusus* had to win their spurs under the burning suns of *Syria* and on the snowy fields of *Germany*.

The hardy and independent mountaineers of the Alps, along its entire range from the Pennine to the Julian peaks, were then, as now, unable to sustain their swelling populations on their periodically devastated tillage lands in the valleys, and the avalanche-swept alps on the heights. Then, as now, the population burst forth from its gorges when over-numerous, like the torrents at the melting of the snows. In the middle ages the overspill of the men became mercenaries to foreign courts ; now they are the pastry-cooks, waiters, masons, to half Europe, and their daughters and sweethearts are nurses and waitresses. But in the classic period the mountaineers had no idea of the peaceful arts, and thought to conquer themselves new homes in the plain, and expel or enslave the pacific population they there found settled. Thus the Alpine peoples were a constant menace and annoyance to *Cisalpine Gaul*, and also to *Gaul* beyond the Alps. *Tiberius* and *Drusus* were commissioned by *Augustus* to finally put an end to this danger. Accordingly, *Tiberius*, after a successful campaign in *Germany*, turned south against the mountaineers, and *Drusus* attacked them in like manner from the south. There is to this day in the range that divides the *Montafun* from the *Rhine Valley*, a snowy gap that goes by the name of the Gate of *Drusus*, through which he is believed rapidly to have passed from one watershed to the other, and suddenly to have fallen on the *Rhaetian* highlanders of *Basque* race, after having crushed and all but exterminated the mountaineers of the Upper *Rhine*, who were of *Helvetian* blood.

*Drusus* commanded the legions in *Germany* when his elder brother was summoned to *Pannonia*. The tenderest and most enduring affection united these brothers, whose characters were so dissimilar, that the one formed the complement to the other. It was a common saying in Rome that they were as inseparable as the *Dioscuri*.

*Tiberius* had concluded the *Pannonian War*, and was accompanying his mother and her imperial husband on a journey of inspection in *Hither Gaul*, and had reached *Ticinum*, the modern *Pavia*, when the

news reached them that Drusus had fallen from his horse, and was lying dangerously ill in Germany. Tiberius, at the command of Augustus, sped at once over the Alps and the Rhine to where his brother lay dying. With a single attendant, a guide named Ambavagius, he traversed four hundred English miles without halting for rest, at full speed, and reached his dying brother, who gathered up his declining strength to give orders to the legions to receive Tiberius with all military honours, and to have his brother's tent erected close to his own.

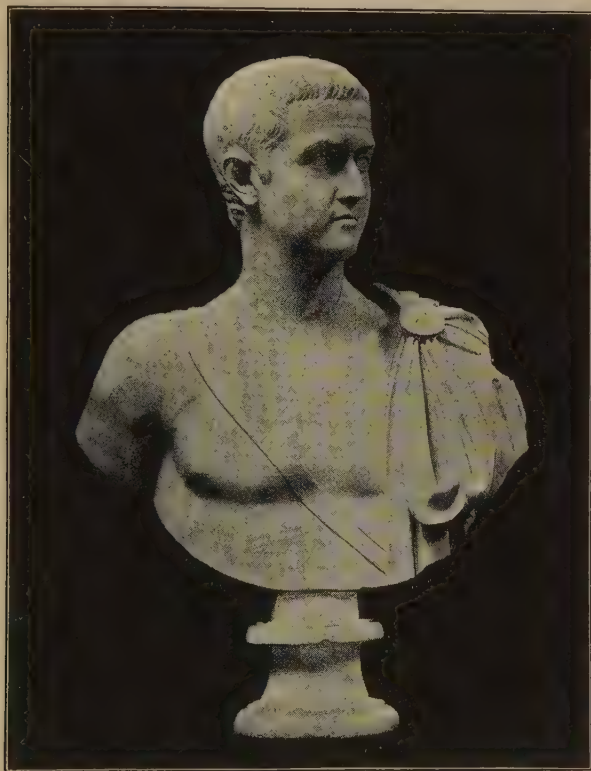


FIG. 50.—DRUSUS MAJOR. Bust in the Torlonia Museum.

A few hours later Drusus breathed his last in the arms of his loved brother, aged hardly thirty years, B.C. 9, thus fulfilling the prophecy of the witch who had met him in the forests of the Cherusci, and waved him back with the warning that he would never see the Rhine again. Tiberius, grieved to the heart, had some difficulty in pacifying the soldiers, who resented his attempt to move the body to Rome, in accordance with the instructions of Augustus. They desired to bury it where he died, and there erect a monumental tumulus. But Tiberius

restrained their intemperate and inconsiderate ardour, and advised them instead to construct an altar on the spot, and devote the site of his accident and death to eternal desolation.

Tiberius escorted the corpse of his brother with great pomp to Rome, making the whole journey on foot in token of his sorrow. At Ticinum the heart-broken mother, and the hardly less grieved Octavian, met the funeral procession and joined it for the remainder of the journey. Thenceforth it formed a 'mournful triumph,' as Seneca calls it. The country-folk, the people of the towns, turned out to honour the deceased, who was sincerely loved, and to express their sympathy with the bereaved parents. Finally, the ashes were laid in the mausoleum of the Julian house, in the Campus Martius.

Augustus set himself to work to compose a little memoir of the deceased, whilst Tiberius stood by his mother's side, as a devoted son, to comfort her in her desolation.

Such was the malice of Roman society, that this fatal blow falling on the house of Livia was tortured into an accusation of crime; and the death of Drusus was attributed to the jealousy of Tiberius and the suspicion of Augustus. Suetonius says, in one place, of Tiberius: 'He first manifested hatred towards his own relations in the case of his brother Drusus, betraying him by the production of a letter to himself, in which Drusus proposed that Augustus should be forced to restore public liberty' (*Tib.* 50). In another place (*Claud.* 1.) he says: 'After his praetorship, Drusus, returning into Germany, died of disease in the summer camp.' Then, a little further, he adds: 'He often declared that he would, some time or other, if possible, restore the ancient government. On this account, I suppose, *some have ventured to affirm* that Augustus was jealous of him, and recalled him; and because he made no haste to comply with the order, took him off by poison. This I mention,' says Suetonius, 'that I may not appear to omit anything, not that I think it either true or probable, since Augustus loved him so sincerely when alive that he always, in his wills, made him joint heir with his sons; and on his decease, extolled him in a speech to the people, declaring that his prayer to the gods was that Caius and Lucius, his grandsons, might grow up like Drusus, and die the same honourable deaths.'

Now it happens that we know from the epitomes of Livy, whose last books—now lost—contained a full account of the campaign of Drusus, that the cause of the death of Drusus was that his horse threw him and fell or trod on his leg, and that he died of the fracture on the thirtieth day after the accident. It is possible enough, it is even probable, that Augustus had sent orders to Drusus not to proceed further into the heart of Germany, thinking it unwise that he should exasperate into hostility the inoffensive tribes beyond the Elbe; and it is also quite possible that he may have sent this injunction, in accordance with the advice of Tiberius, who thoroughly knew the situation of



affairs in Germany, and later showed the same unwillingness to allow the son of Drusus to squander the strength of Roman armies on profitless invasions of barbarian marches. But it is a long stride from this to contriving the murder of Drusus. Suetonius should have told us a little more—the amount of the prize offered by Augustus to corrupt the horse that threw Drusus. We should have liked to have known whether it were the offer of a consulship or of a double feed of oats. This bit of Roman '*on dits*' is instructive. It shows us what 'society' had to say on every casualty that happened in the imperial household, and we can estimate accordingly many of the charges and insinuations that we find in Suetonius and Tacitus, relative to later deaths.

Antonia, the widow of Drusus, a paragon of feminine virtues according to the united testimony of the old writers, declined all offers of marriage after the death of Drusus, and remained in the house of Augustus and Livia, employed in the careful education of her children, and in simple domestic employments. She was left a widow at the age of twenty-six.

The arch which Augustus raised on the Appian Way to the memory of Drusus remains, though defaced by the plunder of its marbles, and disfigured by an aqueduct carried along the summit. The monument raised by the legions to him in their winter camp at Moguntiacum also remains; it is the shapeless ruin of the Eigelstein at Mainz.

In his old age it was some compensation to Augustus for the loss of his grandsons, Caius and Lucius, that he had about him the children of Germanicus and Agrippina. Germanicus was the son of Drusus, born B.C. 15, and married when very young. He was adopted by Tiberius at the command of Augustus, was taken into the Julian family, and invested early with honours and commands. By Agrippina, Germanicus was the father of nine children. A pretty story is preserved relative to Augustus and these great-grandchildren of his.

For long there had been among the Romans, at all events of the upper orders, a disinclination for marriage, and an impatience of being burdened with large families. Various attempts were made to combat this disinclination, which was disastrous to the welfare of the State. Married women who had over two or three children were allowed to wear more sumptuous dresses and recline in richer litters than others. In the Vatican may be seen two trees crowned with rooks' nests out of which a number of little children are peeping. These were set up as a token of honour before the doors of matrons with large families. But nothing prevailed against the growing selfishness and wantonness. In the year B.C. 121, the censor, Metellus Macedonicus, complained before the senate of the increasing tendency to avoid the constraint and inconveniences of marriage. 'Could we exist without wives at all,' he began, 'doubtless we should rid ourselves of the plague they are to us; since, however, nature has decreed that we cannot



FIG. 51.—ANTONIA. Statue in the Louvre.

dispense with the infliction, it is best to bear it manfully, and rather look to the permanent conservation of the state than to our own passing comfort.'

A hundred years later Augustus endeavoured, as had Julius Caesar, by legislation to check the growing evil. In B.C. 29 he turned his energies in this direction, only to meet with disappointment. Upon this point the master of Rome could make no impression on his demoralised subjects. Doggedly resolved against moral restraint, they despised rewards and defied penalties. Eleven years later, Augustus caused the senate to pass a new law of increased stringency, by which the marriage of citizens of a competent age was positively required. When, on the further enforcement of the law, the people loudly and angrily clamoured in the theatre, Augustus rose, and with emotion pointed to the noble form of Germanicus with his faithful Agrippina beside him, and the rich crown of children that encircled the parents. The cries of the people died away at this silent reproof of their vices, and this example of the blessings of honest marriage. Agrippina was married in the year A.D. 5, to Germanicus, when she was aged eighteen, and he was a year her senior. During the fourteen years of their union she bore him, as already said, nine children; of these, two died as babes, and one, who was the favourite of the imperial couple, as he was growing into boyhood. He was a boy of great beauty, brightness, and amiability, called Caius, and was born, A.D. 10, at Tibur. His death was felt deeply by his great-grandparents. Livia had his portrait sculptured with the attributes of Cupid, and dedicated it to the temple of Venus on the Capitol. A copy of it stood in the bedroom of the Emperor Augustus, who used to kiss it every time he went into the chamber.

The remaining children lived. There were three daughters—Agrippina, Drusilla, and Livilla,—and three sons—Nero, Drusus, and Caius,—all older than their sisters.

#### VIII.—DOMESTIC LIFE OF AUGUSTUS.

OF the domestic life and private amusements of Augustus in the midst of his family a few notices remain. He was fond of games of chance, playing for small sums with the boys, or with his friends. Letters have been preserved in which he recounts to Tiberius his bloodless contests at the supper-table with Vinicius and Silius; how they had played, for pastime and not for gain, risking a single denarius on each die, and how he had swept the modest stakes into his pile by the lucky throw of the Venus. 'I supped, my dear Tiberius, with the same company. We gamed at supper like old fellows, both yesterday and to-day, and as every one threw upon the *tali* aces or sixes, for every talus a



FIG. 52.—AUGUSTUS. Statue in the Vatican Gallery of Statues, No. 252.  
Found at Otricoli.



denarius was staked, all which was gained by him who threw the Venus.' In another letter: 'We had, my dear Tiberius, a fine time of it during the festival of Minerva; for we gambled every day, and kept the board warm. Your brother uttered many exclamations at the desperateness of ill-luck that set against him; but, recovering by degrees, and unexpectedly, he did not come off so badly in the end. I lost twenty thousand sesterces for my part; but then I was profusely generous in my play, as I usually am; for had I insisted on taking all my winnings, and retained all I gave away, I should have gained fifty thousand. But I prefer to be liberal, it raised to the skies my credit for generosity.' To Julia he wrote: 'I have sent you 250 denarii, the sum I gave to each of my guests to play at dice with at supper, or, if they pleased, at odd and even.'

In his house, as already said, he was modest, and avoided all luxury and splendour. At his table he was moderate. 'He liked to eat coarse bread,' says Suetonius, 'small fish, and new cream-cheese, and for fruit, green figs. He did not wait for supper, but took something to eat when he wanted it, and anywhere.' Then Suetonius on this subject quotes some of his letters: 'I ate a little bread and some small dates, whilst in my carriage.' Again: 'In returning home in my litter from the palace, I ate an ounce of bread and a few raisins.' Again: 'No Jew, my dear Tiberius, ever keeps so strict a fast on the Sabbath as I did to-day; for whilst in my bath I ate only a couple of biscuits.'

So also with wine, of that he made but a sparing use. He never took more than a pint; during the day no wine at all; instead of drinking he sopped a bit of bread in cold water, or took a slice of cucumber, an apple that was green and acid, or a leaf of lettuce.

'After supper he usually withdrew to his study, a small closet, where he sat late, posting up his diary, entering any little matter he had omitted to note at the time it had happened. After that he went to bed, but he never slept more than seven hours; and that not uninterruptedly, for he was liable to wake up three or four times in the night. If he could not fall asleep again, he called for some one to read to him and tell him stories till he became drowsy. He never liked to lie awake in the dark without some one to sit beside him.'

He could not endure to be exposed to the full blaze of the sun even in winter, and accordingly, when he went out, wore a broad-brimmed hat, such as one may see on the head of an old boatman, in a delightful piece of sculpture in the Torlonia Museum.<sup>1</sup>

His health being always delicate, he avoided the too free use of the bath, and of heated air, and preferred to employ tepid water, or to sit beside a fire when chilled. When he was ordered sea-bathing, he found himself unequal to the shock of a plunge, and contented himself with

<sup>1</sup> This head might serve for a Brixham or a Brighton trawler of the present day. Sea-going habits seem to mark a face with the same characteristics at all times.

having a wooden tub filled with salt water, and plunging his arms and legs into it.

He had no love for popular clamour, and was always a little affected with shyness. Accordingly, he rarely entered any town, or left it, with ceremony, but slipped in or out, without notice after dark. Several instances of his moderation with regard to the honours lavished on him have been recorded. When he heard that a number of statues of solid silver had been erected in his honour, he was annoyed and ordered



FIG. 53.—AUGUSTUS. Bust in the Vatican Museum, Hall of Busts, No. 274.

them to be melted up and made into tripods for the temple of Apollo on the Palatine. He could not bear to be entitled 'My lord.' Once, at a play at which he was present, the words occurred, 'O just and gracious lord!' whereat the audience looking towards him began to cheer; Augustus at once arrested this exhibition of indecent flattery by waving his hand and frowning. He never would allow himself to be so addressed even by his own children and grandchildren, in jest or in earnest. He usually walked about Rome on foot, or rode in a close

carriage to avoid receiving and returning salutations. Once when a man offered him a petition with nervous clumsiness, 'My good friend,' said Augustus, 'one would suppose you were offering a ha'penny to an elephant!'

Augustus was more disposed to behave with leniency in his old age, than when he was young. His friend and adviser, Athenodorus, did not scruple to tell him his mind. When the Greek came to him to bid farewell before departing to his home, he said in the ear of Augustus: 'Never, O Caesar, pronounce sentence against any man till thou hast recited to thyself the four-and-twenty letters of the alphabet.' Augustus sighed, and laying hold of his monitor, said: 'Stay with me; I need you still.'

He never molested any one for the exercise of freedom of speech, although it was often carried to a pitch of insolence. Moreover, the detestable libels relative to Augustus, in which the Roman fine ladies and gentlemen delighted, were freely circulated, and even thrust into the hands of the senators in the senate-house. Augustus bore this with equanimity. He was wise enough to know that he would be powerless to stop the circulation, and he attempted neither to refute the calumnies nor to search out and punish the authors. It is probable that some of the scandalous stories relative to Augustus—his amours with married women—that Suetonius is delighted to record, are due to these libels.

Tiberius, who was peculiarly sensitive to calumny, once spoke to Augustus about some scurrilous libels that were circulating relative to him, and urged that the authors should be sought out and punished. 'No, my dear Tiberius,' answered Augustus, 'do not give way to the ardour of your youth in this matter, nor be indignant that any one should malign me. It is enough for us if we can prevent folk from doing us real mischief.'

On one occasion Athenodorus was carried into the presence of the prince in a closed litter, such as was employed by ladies, and then leaped out on him with a drawn sword in his hand, exclaiming: 'See to what dangers you expose yourself! Any one might come thus and take your life.'<sup>1</sup>

His good-nature was sometimes taken advantage of. Cn. Domitius Calvinus rebuilt the *regia* on the Sacred Way, that had been burnt down, and for the dedication asked Augustus to lend him a number of his best statues. The prince readily consented. After the dedication he required Calvinus to return them; but received the answer that he, the

<sup>1</sup> So stood the story originally. Zonaras has worked it up into one that does little credit to Augustus. He says that the prince sent for those wives of senators, who took his fancy. The husband of one thus sent for complained to Athenodorus, who then got into the litter in place of the lady. The hand of the anecdote-maker is visible here, giving piquancy and completeness to the story as it reached him.

borrower, had not a sufficiency of servants to transport them back again, and that if Augustus wanted them he must fetch them himself, but that it would be a sacrilege to do so, as the building in which they were had been dedicated to the gods. Augustus was obliged to leave them where they were. He might have recalled a similar trick played by Lucius Mummius on Lucullus, at the dedication of the Temple of Fortune.<sup>1</sup>

Augustus was careful to keep his word even to those who were unworthy. In Spain, a bandit, Concotta, gave so much trouble that a price was put on his head; two hundred and fifty denarii Augustus undertook to give to the man who delivered up the robber alive. Concotta appeared before Augustus. The prince not only spared his life, but handed over to him the covenanted sum.

Old friends and adherents were not forgotten by him. When on one occasion a companion-in-arms asked Augustus to assist him in court, where he was impeached, the prince declined on the plea of business, but promised to send him a friend who was a skilful advocate. Then said the old soldier, 'When formerly you wanted my arm, I gave you my own, and did not send a friend instead.' Augustus at once went with him into court.

Augustus could and did say smart things occasionally, but most of his jokes, if we may judge by those collected by Macrobius, are rather plays on words, and therefore lose all point when translated. Puns are the mere mummary of wit. But these are better: Speaking of striving after things not worth having, he said, 'Don't fish for minnows with a golden hook.' Once he wrote a tragedy on the story of Ajax, but, becoming dissatisfied with the style, he blotted it out. Some one asked him, 'How is Ajax getting along?' 'Poorly,' answered Augustus, 'he fell on his sponge.'<sup>2</sup>

We know that men are ready enough to damn the sins they are themselves not inclined to, but it is exceptional, though not unknown, that a man should condemn those errors of which he is guilty himself. Now Augustus showed himself strenuous in his efforts to restore the morals of the higher classes of Rome to their primitive purity. He disliked extravagance in living, and he set the example of simplicity himself. He was averse to intemperance, and he was himself studiously sober. He forbade luxury at the table, and his own meals were of the most homely description. His effort was directed by example as well as by law to regenerate the Roman people on the lines of primitive honesty and frugality as they were exhibited in the best days of the republic. It is, of course, possible that he may have occasionally transgressed and fallen short of the models he set before himself, but it is

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cass. *Fragm.* 206.

<sup>2</sup> That is to say, as Ajax fell on his sword, so had the dramatic Ajax committed suicide on a wet sponge.



hardly likely that he was as gross a sensualist as Suetonius represents him.

‘Whenever he attended at the election of magistrates,’ says this author, ‘he went round the tribes, with the candidates of his nomination, and begged the votes of the people in the usual manner. He likewise voted in his proper place in his tribe as one of the people. He suffered himself to be summoned as a witness upon trials, and not only to be questioned, but to be cross-examined, with the utmost patience. In building the forum, he restricted himself in the site, not presuming to force the owners of the houses abutting on it to give up their property. He never recommended his sons to the people without adding the words, ‘If they deserve it.’ And upon the audience rising on their entering the theatre, when they were minors, he made it a matter of complaint.’

In his speech and writing he was careful to be plain and to the point, and detested all affectation, such as the use of obsolete words, and the involution of sentences. He was wont to rally Maecenas on his ‘spiced’ speech, and imitated it in joke to break him of the habit. Nor did he spare Tiberius, who was pedantic in style. Marc Antony he rebuked for extravagance in his expressions, and in a letter to his granddaughter Agrippina on the formation of style, he wrote, ‘You must be particularly careful, both in writing and in speaking, to avoid all affectation.’

‘In person,’ says Suetonius, ‘he was delicately formed and graceful, through every period of his life. But he was negligent in his dress; and so careless about dressing his hair, that he usually had it done in a scramble, by several barbers at once. His beard he sometimes clipped, and sometimes shaved, and either read or wrote during the operation. His countenance, either when in discourse or silent, was so calm and serene that a Gaul once declared among his friends, that on his passage over the Alps he drew near Augustus with the deliberate purpose of throwing him over a precipice, but he was so softened by the serenity of the prince’s face that he desisted from so doing. The eyes of Augustus were bright and piercing; and he was willing it should be supposed there was some divine vigour in them. He was likewise not a little pleased when he saw people lower their eyes when he looked fixedly on them, as though dazzled by the light from his own eyes; but in his old age, he saw very imperfectly with his left eye. His teeth, set far apart, were small and scaly; his hair naturally curled a little, and was of a colour inclining to yellow. His eyebrows met, his ears were small, and he had an aquiline nose. His complexion was between brown and fair; his stature but low, though his freedman, Julius Marathus, declares he was five feet nine inches high. He had a weakness of the left hip, thigh, and leg, that caused him to halt somewhat. He likewise sometimes found the forefinger of his right hand so weak that, when it was benumbed with cold, he was forced

to have recourse to a circular piece of horn to enable him to write.' Many little acts of kindness are recorded of him. One day when out hunting, he was attacked by a wild boar, and his attendant ran away and left him unprotected; but he would not punish the man, because he said he was convinced the fellow fled out of fear for his own life, and not out of lack of affection to his master. He heard of an old senator who had gone blind, and was so distressed at his privation that he had resolved to starve himself to death. Augustus paid him a visit, sat by him, talked to him cheerfully, and encouraged him to bear his loss as a man, and desist from his project. After an airing in his litter, if he saw boys playing with marbles or nuts, he would have a game with them, and thoroughly enjoy their childish sports. At one time he would play ball, and ride in the Campus Martius, or saunter along the banks of the Tiber fishing. He was curious about natural curiosities, and made a collection of fossil bones and shells, and it was thought he was more interested in accumulating these than in gathering together statues and pictures.

The story is told of him, which was told later of many Catholic saints, that being incommoded by the quacking of frogs he ordered them to be silent, and the frogs obeyed.

Towards the end of his days there were threatenings of trouble. A plot was discovered for the liberation of Julia and Agrippa Postumus from their respective prisons, and there can be no doubt that the Scribonian faction was at the bottom of this, jealous of the growing regard of Augustus for his stepson Tiberius. Augustus, shortly after, was believed to have paid a private visit to the unfortunate Agrippa, to ascertain by his own observation the condition of mind in which he was, and whether it would be possible for him to recall him to Rome and associate him with Tiberius in the imperial inheritance. Some writers mention this visit as a rumour, others state it as a fact. If the visit ever did occur, Augustus made it very privately; he adopted every precaution to baffle observation, and was attended by a single confidant, and very few servants. The interview was marked by emotion and tears on both sides; so Maximus, the confidant, told his wife, and his wife told Livia. When, shortly afterwards, Maximus was found dead, it was at once said that he had been put to death by Augustus for betraying his visit.

Probably he satisfied himself that the condition of the unfortunate youth was hopeless, and nothing came of this visit, if ever made, whilst Augustus lived. We shall see later on that it had its fatal result after his death.<sup>1</sup>

As old age and weakness crept on, Augustus appeared less frequently

<sup>1</sup> Pliny mentions a suspicion that Agrippa was not the son of Julia by her husband, and that the knowledge of this had something to do with the conduct of Augustus towards him.

in public. Failing in strength and spirits, he desired his kind friends, the senators and knights of Rome, no longer to incommode him with their salutations as he was borne through the streets, and asked them not to take it as an offence if he declined their invitations to table, which he no longer had the ability to accept.

## IX.—THE END.

IN the year A.D. 14, when Augustus was reaching the completion of his seventy-sixth year, he felt that his end was approaching. His health, which in youth had required constant care and unusual precaution, had certainly become better as he advanced in years, but now with the weight of old age it began once more to give way.

He was wont in summer to retire from Rome, where he felt the great heats, to one of his villas near the sea. He was detained, however, on this last occasion till midsummer, later than usual, and was impatient to be off. A good deal of fresh business was brought before him, but he would not attend to it then, as he was weakly and longing for the sea-breezes,—‘No,’ said he, ‘not all the business in the world will detain me in Rome one moment longer.’

Tiberius was now returning to his troops in Illyricum, and was to sail from Brundisium. The old emperor made his adopted son accompany him on his journey, and they went leisurely together, Livia being, as usual, in constant attendance on her husband, as far as Astura, where Augustus was attacked by dysentery, brought on, it was supposed, by incautious exposure to the night air. However, as he felt better after a day or two, they took ship and sailed along the delightful coast of Campania among the islets, and halted for four days at Capreae, which Augustus had acquired some years before, when, on the occasion of a visit there, a withered ilex, that had been supposed to be dying, put forth fresh buds. Augustus was pleased at the good omen, and bought the island.

As he was sailing past the Gulf of Pozzuoli, a merchant ship of Alexandria passed, and the sailors, recognising the imperial galley, clothed themselves in white, placed wreaths on their heads, burnt incense, and shouted their salutations. This gratified the old man, and he gave those about him forty pieces of gold apiece, with express orders that they should go to this vessel, and spend the money on the purchase of some of the commodities in it.

During the four days he was at Capreae he diverted himself in his kindly, cheerful manner. He gave Roman togas and Greek mantles to his whole court, and bade the Greeks therein assume the toga and the Romans wear the mantle. He attended the amusements of the young peasants in the island, and begged them not to desist because of his being a looker-on. After his dinner, he set the boys scrambling for the dessert from his table.

From Capreae he went to Naples, still feeling indisposed. He was, however, desirous to appear at the Quinquennial games there, as an act of courtesy to the people, who had instituted these games in his honour, and though ill at ease, and weak with his malady, he remained to the conclusion. Then he continued his journey with Tiberius as far as Beneventum, where they parted, and Augustus turned back towards the coast.



FIG. 54.—AUGUSTUS, as Pontifex Maximus. Bust in the Louvre.

At Nola his exhaustion became so great that he was obliged to take to his bed. Here he was in the family house of the Octavian race, and he was placed in the very room in which his father had died.

‘The closing scene of this illustrious life,’ says Dean Merivale, ‘has been portrayed for us with considerable minuteness. It is the first natural dissolution of a great man we have been called upon to witness, and it will be long, I may add, before we shall assist at another.’

The old emperor did not deceive himself with hopes of recovery ; he was short of his seventy-sixth birthday by only a little over a month.



On the last day of his life, after inquiring whether his condition had aroused commotions in Rome, which he feared, knowing the hostility of the rival parties there, and being satisfied that there was tranquillity, he asked for a looking-glass, and had his hair put straight, and something done to his cheeks that they might not appear as hollow as the dysentery had made them. Then, calling in his friends, and making them surround his bed, he asked whether they thought he had played his part well in the drama of life. He immediately added, in a

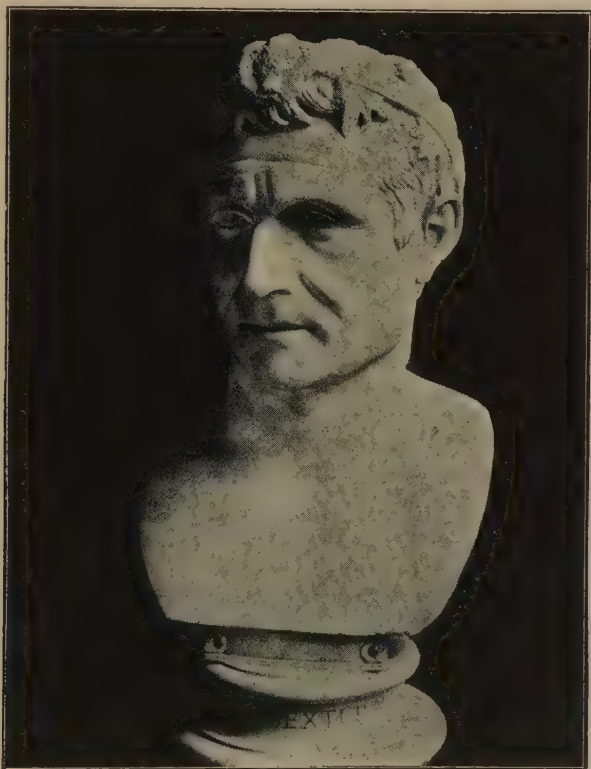


FIG. 55.—AUGUSTUS. Bust in Mus. Pio Clementino, Vatican, No. 275.

Greek verse with which Roman plays usually concluded: 'Let all applaud, and clap their hands with joy.' After that he dismissed them, and inquired of Livia, who remained at his side, whether any tidings had been heard of Livilla, the daughter of Drusus, who was out of health. Then suddenly he threw his arms round the neck of Livia, and kissing her, said, 'Livia! live mindful of our union; and now farewell!' Then he gently expired without pain, and without a struggle.

Augustus died on the 19th August A.D. 14.

Directly that Livia saw that death was stealing on, she sent couriers after Tiberius, and caught him on his disembarkation in Illyricum. He returned without delay, and it is probable that he arrived in time to receive the parting injunction of his father-in-law, as he certainly was to discharge towards him the last offices of filial piety.

The malignant hatred of the adherents of Julia and the enemies of the Claudian house, at once circulated the report that Livia had removed her husband by poison administered in figs. We know that Augustus was fond of green figs ; it is possible he may have eaten some, and that in the beginning of August they were not ripe, and disagreed with him. 'To exculpate Livia or Tiberius,' says Dean Merivale, 'from such a crime may be hardly worth the endeavour ; but it is important to mark the weakness of the grounds upon which historians of high character could venture to insinuate it against them.'

#### X.—PORTRAITS OF AUGUSTUS.

BERNOULLI gives ninety-five busts and statues of Augustus. The following alone need enumeration, which are the best :—

1. Youthful bust, found at Ostia ; Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 273 (see above, Fig. 32).
2. Youthful bust in the Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 600.
3. Bust in same Gallery, No. 628, Augustus as a young man.
4. Naked statue, wrongly called Caligula, in Vatican, Gallery of Statues, No. 262. A somewhat sinister expression ; the age about 28. It was found in the Julian basilica of Otricoli (Fig. 52).
5. Half-naked youthful statue in the Vatican, Hall of the Greek Cross ; age about 28, No. 559. The head was never separated from the body. It came from the Verospi Palace.
6. Colossal bust, Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 401 ; found at Veii in 1811 (Fig. 34).
7. Colossal bust, found with the above ; in the Lateran, No. 423.
8. Bust, Florence (Fig. 33).
9. Bust, in black marble, Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 65.
10. Statue, found in the villa of Livia, at Prima Porta ; Vatican Nuovo Braccio, No. 17 (Fig. 46).
11. Statue in toga ; Vatican, from Otricoli, No. 597. Young, as Pontifex Maximus, with stern expression, and frown.
12. Bronze head in the Vatican Library, age about 34 ; good.
13. Bust, very fine, with wreath ; Capitoline Museum, No. 1 *bis* Stanza degli Imperatori.
14. Bust, draped, Greek marble, Capitoline Mus. ; *ibid.* No. 2.
15. Statue, nude, raising the left arm ; in the right a globe ; somewhat conventional ; *ibid.* Salone, No. 10.

16. Statue, seated, nude, save for chlamys, left hand resting on sceptre, in the right the globe. Found at Bovillae, where was the sacrum of the Julian family; Torlonia Gallery, No. 164.

17. Bust, with chlamys, from Albani Villa; Torlonia Gallery, No. 305.

18. Bust, with cuirass, in Luna marble; *ibid.* No. 306.

19. Bust, in cuirass; *ibid.* No. 513.

20. Bust, crowned with ears of corn, as Frater Arvalis; Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 274. Found on the Caelian Hill (Fig. 53).

21. Bust representing the emperor at an advanced age; Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 275 (Fig. 55).

22. Colossal head from Cervetri, in the Lateran.

23. Statue in armour; Villa Albani, No. 87.

24. Bronze bust from Herculaneum; Mus. National., Naples, No. 2.

25. Bronze statue from Herculaneum, on the signet-ring is a *lituus*; Naples, No. 3.

26. Veiled bust in the Louvre; although it comes from the Campana collection, is probably genuine; nose restored (Fig. 54).

27. Toga-clothed statue in the Louvre, the hand in the breast. The head does not belong to the statue.

28. Another statue in toga, with folded papers in the hand; in the Louvre. The very fine head of Augustus does not belong to the statue.

29. Bronze bust in the Louvre; found along with a Livia, names on the pedestals, at Neuilly-le-Réal; of little value as portraits.

30. Youthful bust in the collection Despaig, in Majorca. Found at Ariccia at the end of last century.

31. Youthful bust in the British Museum, from the Castellani collection, No. 3; a very characteristic and fine head (Fig. 31).

32. Head, larger than life, in British Museum, No. 4; like the Prima Porta face.

33. Another youthful bust in the British Museum.

34. A bust recently acquired in Rome for the British Museum.

35. A fine bust; Warwick Castle.

36. Bust, with crown of oak leaves, at Munich; of little value for portraiture.

37. Another at Munich, without wreath, and with more character.

38. A youthful statue in armour at Berlin, No. 343, from the Pourtalès collection. The head is of different marble from the body (Fig. 44).

39. Youthful head at Vienna; in the Belvedere, No. 107.

40. Another head, resembling the Prima Porta face; *ibid.* No. 60.

41. Alabaster head; fine; *ibid.*

There are numerous gems—some in the British Museum. The finest is the sardonyx cameo from the Strozzi-Blacas collection (see Fig. 35). The diadem was added at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Another is a sardonyx, broken, from the same collection. In

the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, is a cameo of Augustus crowned with laurel, and an intaglio with civic crown ; also a fine youthful Augustus. I must refer the reader for the catalogue of engraved stones to Bernoulli ; and for the medals to Cohen.

#### XI.—PORTRAITS OF LIVIA.

1. Cameo from the S. Chapelle, Paris ; idealised.
2. Intaglio, sardonyx ; Vienna. Livia enthroned and crowned, holding corn ears and poppy-heads in one hand, in the other a bust of Augustus. The hands are exaggerated in size by the artist. There can be no question either as to who is meant or as to the resemblance to other intaglios and cameos.
3. Sardonyx at Florence, as Cybele, with a wreath of corn and poppies (Fig. 37).
4. The same face, somewhat younger, in an intaglio at the Hague. The hair is worn as in the porphyry bust of Octavia. If this face be compared with that of Tiberius and Livia—the latter aged, in the Florentine collection—it is hardly possible to doubt that the Hague stone represents the same person in her youth and loveliness. The same short upper lip, the same peculiar treatment of the eye (Fig. 36).
5. A sardonyx at St. Petersburg, with laurel wreath. This is unmistakably Livia grown a little old and stout (Fig. 48).
6. Among medals most are untrustworthy, as Livia was the first woman to have her head on coins ; she is represented ideally as Pietas, Justitia, Salus Augusta. However, one with her as Justice, of the year B.C. 22, one as Piety of the year 23, and another as ‘Salus Augusta,’ show a certain attempt at portraiture in them.
7. The paste cameo of Tiberius and Livia when aged, at Florence, is admirable. The likeness between mother and son is very striking (Frontispiece).
8. Statue of Livia from Otricoli, as Pietas ; Vatican, Hall of Busts, No. 56. Very little character in the face.
9. Seated statue in the Torlonia Gallery. Not to be relied on as a portrait ; not a little uncertain to what an extent restored.
10. Statue of Livia as Ceres, in the Louvre ; the likeness to Tiberius, whose bust stands close by, can hardly fail to strike an observer (Figs. 38 and 39).

The statue of a young priestess found at Pompeii in 1821, though near it is said to have been found an inscription, ‘Augustae Juliae Drusi Fil. Divi. Augusti, D.D.,’ cannot be regarded as a portrait of Livia. There is absolutely no element in the face to connect it with any of the heads on the gems, nor is there a trace of resemblance in this face to be found to Tiberius or Drusus. The mouth is large, fleshy, and with a double curvature in it, which is so peculiar that it would



inevitably have been reproduced on the gems. The formation of the jaw is different, so also that of the chin. There is no remarkable characterisation of the eyes; nor is the hair worn in the fashion of the time of Livia's youth. Engraved by Bernoulli.

11. The very interesting bronze head, inscribed with the name of Livia, found at Neuilly-le-Réal, along with its companion bust of Augustus, in 1816. It is poor as a work of art and as a piece of portraiture, nevertheless the resemblance to the profile of the Livia-Ceres statue in the Louvre is worthy of remark. In this, as in the cameos, there is an attempt made to exaggerate the eyes, so as to give the idea of great lustre in them.

12. A seated colossal figure found at Paestum, together with one of Tiberius; both are now at Madrid. It represents Livia as an old lady, and agrees admirably with the St. Petersburg sardonyx (Fig. 74).



FIG. 56.—TIBERIUS. Bust in the Lateran.

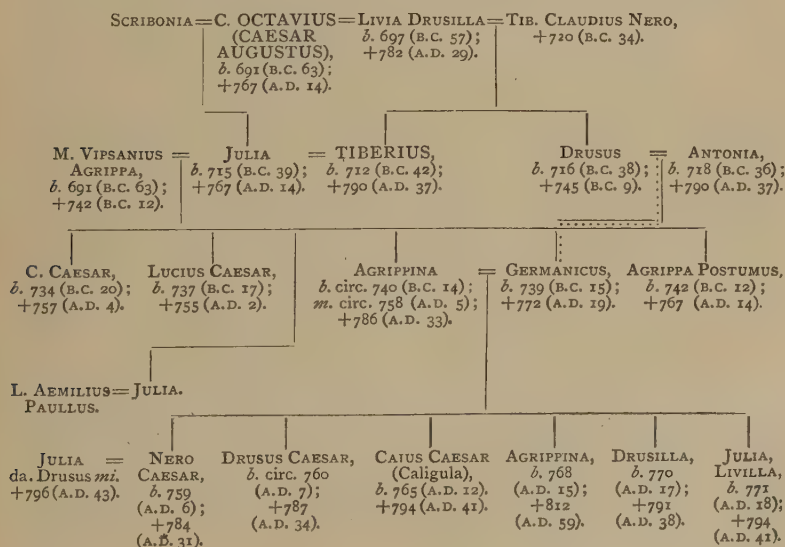
# TIBERIUS

## I.—THE DEATH OF POSTUMUS.

THE death of Augustus was immediately succeeded by a tragedy of a peculiarly dark and mysterious nature in his own family.

The news of the critical condition in which Augustus lay at Nola had reached Rome, and had revived the hopes and sharpened the ambitions of all the partisans of the Julian branch of the reigning dynasty, and it encouraged the renewal of the attempts that had been frustrated, of releasing Agrippa, the last surviving prince of the Julian house, from his confinement in the island of Planasia, and of setting him on the throne. A confidential agent, who had formerly been his chamberlain, Clemens by name, was the prime mover in this plot. He proposed to deliver the prince and convey him to the German legions, in the hopes that at their head he might assert, and, if need be, make good his right to the vacant throne.

The plan was a bold one, and we may be sure that it was not, as Tacitus intimates, a private venture. Others were in the plot.



No sooner did the tidings arrive at the capital that Augustus was no more, than Clemens at once started in a vessel for Planasia. But as he made his way thither with full sail, the imperial galley swept past, and reached the island before the ship on which was Clemens. When this latter arrived, it was to discover that Agrippa Postumus was no more. A centurion had been sent from Nola, and, after a desperate struggle with the frantic young man, had killed him.

Who commanded this murder?



FIG. 57.—AGRIPPA  
POSTUMUS.  
Medal struck at Corinth.

Let us see what we really know about Agrippa before we decide. This young prince, as Tacitus tells us, 'was a person destitute of liberal accomplishments, of clownish brutality, and great bodily strength.' The opinions circulating in Rome relative to him, he says, were that 'he was by nature gloomy and savage, and was exasperated by opposition.' Suetonius, as we have already seen, speaks of him as quite intractable, and becoming daily more deranged.

Scurrilous and abusive pamphlets were circulated in Rome, purporting to have been written by Agrippa against his grandfather, and one man was fined for putting them in circulation. There can be little doubt that they emanated from the party of Julia, the remnant of the old oligarchical faction, who sought to pit Agrippa against Tiberius.

Considering the intense desire Augustus manifested to make his throne hereditary, the love and pride he had in his grandsons Caius and Lucius, we may be certain that the reason of his passing over Agrippa was that he was well aware that the young man was insane, and absolutely incapable of succeeding him. He knew, however, that there was a party in Rome, the party of his daughter Julia—or, rather, a selfish, ambitious party of nobles—who hoped to fish for themselves in troubled waters, and recover some of their old privileges under an incapable head. They would therefore desire to set this poor wretch in his place, in opposition to Tiberius, the only man mentally and morally equal to the task of succeeding to power. Augustus knew that civil war must break out after his death were Agrippa suffered to live. He had already nipped in the bud a plot to elevate this madman in his place. He took his measures. He had passed through the horrors of civil war himself, and desired to spare Rome a renewal of this terrible misery. He had accordingly given orders to the tribune intrusted with the oversight of Agrippa to put him to death directly the tidings of his own decease reached him. This command was executed. The tribune commissioned a centurion to kill Agrippa; but so great was the strength of the young man, and so desperate a struggle did he make for his life, that although he was unprovided with weapons, he taxed the full powers of his executioner.



To all appearance, Tiberius had no share in this murder; indeed, knew nothing about it till it was committed. When the centurion brought him the report that 'his command was executed,' Tiberius answered that he had given no such command, and that the centurion must appear before the senate and be made to answer for what he had done. Tiberius actually purposed to have the case sifted in public, and it required the earnest representations of Livia and those involved in the matter, to induce him to abstain from so doing, and to send a message to the senate that Agrippa had been put to death by command of Augustus. Tacitus says that this was a bit of dissimulation, and adds that it was impossible to suppose that Augustus, with his warm attachment for his grandchildren, could have given the command, merely to secure the succession to a son of Livia. Suetonius says: 'Agrippa was slain by a tribune who commanded the guard set over him, upon reading a written order for that purpose: respecting which order it remained doubtful whether Augustus left it at his last moments, in order to prevent any public disturbances after his death, or whether Livia issued it in the name of Augustus, and whether it was issued with or without the knowledge of Tiberius.'

When Tiberius threatened to have the matter investigated before the senate, Crispus Sallustius, a confidant of the deceased emperor, had an interview with Livia. The cabinet order for the execution had passed through his hands to the tribune. He represented 'that palace secrets, friendly counsels, and ministerial acts should not be divulged; and that Tiberius would only enfeeble the force of princely authority by referring all things to the senate.'

Livia saw that a great scandal would ensue were the matter gone further into, and she persuaded her son to send the curt message to the senate mentioned already, containing what in all likelihood was a true statement of the circumstances.

We have, curiously enough, a specimen of the way in which reports circulated in Rome, and got altered in form, in the accounts that come to us relative to the fate of the companion of Augustus on his visit to Agrippa shortly before his own death.

Tacitus tells the story as it reached him: 'A rumour got abroad that Augustus, having singled out a few to whom he communicated his purpose, had taken Fabius Maximus for his only companion,<sup>1</sup> and had sailed over to the island of Planasia to visit Agrippa; that many tears were shed on both sides, many tokens of mutual tenderness shown; that Maximus had disclosed all this to his wife Marcia, and she told

<sup>1</sup> Paullus Fabius Maximus was a friend of Ovid, who addressed epistles to him and deplored his death. From the *Acta Arvalia* it would seem that he was alive on May 14, in the year that Augustus died. It is altogether improbable that the aged and failing prince could have slipped away, unknown to his watchful wife, and made a sea journey to Planasia. Marcia, the wife of Fabius Maximus, was the daughter of the aunt of Augustus (*Atia minor*) by her husband L. Marcius Philippus.

Livia ; that the emperor was informed of this, and that, Maximus dying soon after (it is uncertain whether naturally or by means sought for the purpose) Marcia was observed in her lamentations at his funeral to upbraid herself as the cause of her husband's destruction.'

Plutarch lived at the same time that Tacitus wrote, and he also tells the story ; but, observe, Tacitus tells it all as a rumour—a bit of popular chatter, based on a few exclamations made by a lady at her husband's funeral. Plutarch tells the story very differently : 'Fulvius,' he says—to begin with, he has the name wrong,—'a friend of the emperor Augustus, heard him once in his old age lamenting his domestic solitude, bereaved of his two grandsons (Caius and Lucius) by death, and of Postumus, who had been banished on account of a slanderous accusation, so that the emperor was left with no other choice for a successor but his stepson, although he regretted his grandson, and desired to restore him from banishment.

'Fulvius repeated what he had heard to his wife, and she confided it to Livia, who at once overwhelmed the emperor with reproaches, and complained that he should think of reinstating his grandson and exposing her to his hatred and resentment. When, shortly after this, Fulvius one morning came before Augustus and gave him his usual salutation, the emperor replied, 'I wish you more common sense. Farewell.' Fulvius understood the hint at once, and hastened home, and told his wife : "The emperor knows that I have revealed the secret I overheard, and so I will commit suicide." "You meet with your desert," answered his wife ; "we have been married all these years, and have you not discovered till now that I am a chatterbox ! You should have been cautious not to let me know what is not to be divulged. I also will die—and die first." Thereupon she seized a dagger, and stabbed herself to death before he died.'

Now this furnishes a very extraordinary discrepancy in almost every particular except the death of Fabius, and shows us how this sort of court scandal varied in the forms it assumed. Pliny alludes to it when he enumerates the troubles that beset Augustus ; one of these, he says, was the chattering of Fabius. He has the name right, but gives us no particulars. 'The degradation (*abdicio*) of Postumus Agrippa after he had adopted him, the longing he had to have him back again after he had been banished, then (*inde*) the suspicion he entertained relative to Fabius, of having betrayed his secrets ; hence (*hinc*) the schemes (*cogitationes*) of his wife and Tiberius :—these were his last anxieties.'

We shall never get nearer the truth concerning the death of Agrippa, and all that can be said with any confidence is that the balance of probabilities is that the execution was due to the order of Augustus, to save Rome from civil war. If so, he was successful, though not as completely as he desired. For, no sooner did Clemens find that

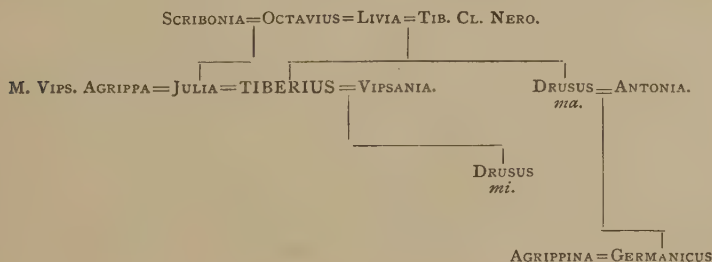
Agrippa was dead than a bold plan flashed through his brain. He bore a certain resemblance to the murdered prince, and he resolved to take advantage of this to revenge the murder and gratify the hatred of his prompters. He returned to the mainland and remained in concealment till his beard was grown, so as to heighten his likeness to the deceased prince. The heads of the party in whose interest he acted agreed to the deception, and by their means the rumour was spread that Agrippa was still alive and prepared to substantiate his claims to the inheritance and throne of his grandfather. The rumour was received with avidity, and occasioned a great stir.

Wherever the pretender appeared, in Gaul and in upper Italy, he was received with enthusiasm. When he landed at Ostia, crowds poured out to meet and welcome him. In Rome, organised bands of armed men were in readiness to assert his claims with their swords.

Tiberius behaved with prudence and promptitude. The time was critical. Tidings had reached him that mutiny had broken out in the legions in the provinces. That the man was an impostor he knew well enough, through Sallustius Crispus, who had seen to the accomplishment of the secret orders for the death of Postumus. Instead of sending troops against him, Tiberius obtained his arrest through treachery, at night, and he was brought in chains to the imperial palace in Rome. There he was tortured, but maintained his story. It was said among the enemies of Livia and Tiberius, that when the latter asked him: 'How he had become Agrippa?' the fellow boldly answered: 'Just in the same way as you became Caesar.' He was removed and put to death. Though numerous members of the imperial house, many senators and many knights, were in the plot, Tiberius refused to have any examination made into the ramifications of the conspiracy, and the matter was prudently allowed to drop into oblivion.

## II.—THE EARLY LIFE OF TIBERIUS.

WE will now turn back to the early years of Tiberius, and briefly follow his history during these years; for it was by the trials, slights, disappointments of this period that his character was moulded.



In the museums of Rome the statues and busts of Tiberius at all periods of his life are plentiful. There is no mistaking them. The delicacy, the feminine beauty of the features, the broad brow, the nervous mouth, and sensitive, weak chin, the large sad eyes, become familiar to every student in these galleries. To me, standing before them, observing them in every light, from every side, they presented a psychological enigma. Again and again have I come before them, Tacitus and Suetonius in hand, and have striven to read into them the characteristics of the man as sketched by Tacitus and stippled by Suetonius. It was impossible. Either the sculptors had combined to falsify his face, or the historians had misinterpreted his nature. And when I came to read these two writers with the view of finding out whether there were not something very different in Tiberius from what they supposed, it seemed to me that the clue to the interpretation of his character and conduct lay on the surface. Take that clue in hand, and the entire story of Tiberius is seen in a new light, and the real man is disclosed who perfectly accords with the representations of him left by the sculptors' chisel.

Tiberius, or to give him his name in full, Tiberius Claudius Nero, was born on the 16th November B.C. 42, in his father's house on the

A.U.C. 712.  
B.C. 42.

Palatine, possibly the very house now completely discontinued, showing all its chambers and courts; if so, then a modest house indeed. His father, of the same name, had been greatly favoured by Julius Caesar, and rewarded all the favour shown him by going over to the party of the Liberators after the death of Caesar. In the Perusian war he took the side of the consul Lucius Antonius, brother of the triumvir, and after his defeat fled, as already related, to Naples, and thence to Sicily and to Greece. The young child Tiberius was hurried in his mother's arms from place to place, hushed lest his crying should betray the place of concealment of his parents, and sucking in with his mother's milk nervous alarm from her fluttering breast. She herself was but a child aged fifteen when she bore him. In Sicily the refugees had been kindly received by Pompeia, daughter of the great Pompeius; and this lady gave the child a little cloak, and a brooch and amulet, which were long afterwards preserved and shown in the villa of Tiberius at Baiae.

Livia was but nineteen and her child four when she returned to Rome, and took up her quarters in the little house on the Palatine.

A.U.C. 716.  
B.C. 38.  
Act. 4.

This was but a bow-shot distant from the house of Octavian; accordingly the young Octavian had frequent opportunities of seeing her. As already told, he insisted on her husband divorcing Livia, whereupon he married her, though she was expecting her confinement. The childhood of Tiberius was not happy. The separation of his parents; the early death of his father, at whose funeral he, though still a child, had to make an oration; the dislike entertained



for him by his stepfather, who preferred to him his younger brother Drusus, and later the children of Julia;—all conduced to cloud his young days. Moreover, the rivalries of the two parties, the purposed slights to which he was exposed, the suspicion and jealousy that watched his every step, the malice that perverted his every word, and bore it in its perverted form to the ear of Augustus, left a deep and enduring stamp on his spirit at the age when characters are formed. Naturally sensitive, he became shy and reserved. From boyhood he received the nickname of 'The old fellow' (*ὁ πρεσβύτης*) from his precocious gravity.

We know almost nothing of his youth till he reached his eighteenth year, except such superficial matter as—on what horse of the car he rode in the Attic triumph of Octavian, in what place he sat at the triumphal banquet, and how he marshalled the boys in the game of Troy. And almost nothing at all is told us of his education, though it cannot be doubted that Octavian, who laid great stress on the thoroughness and goodness of the teaching of the boys in his house, would see that the education of his stepson was not neglected. We are told that Messala Corvinus was his tutor, a man of the highest character. Not a hint is given that the young Tiberius was guilty of excesses of any kind during his youth. Indeed, Tacitus says of this period, as of that later, till his succession to the throne, that it was exemplary.

Marcellus, the son of Octavia, who had been adopted by Augustus and married to his own daughter, died, and the prince was obliged to look to Tiberius as his assistant in carrying on the affairs of government, and as a buttress to his dynasty. He obtained a decree from the senate that permitted Tiberius to assume the several offices in the state some years before the legal age. Accordingly he was invested with the quaestorship when nineteen. Augustus somewhat later confided to him other duties, and those of importance, viz., the charge of the provisioning of Rome, and that of supervision of all the slave establishments in Italy, as murmurs were heard that the great dealers in human cattle did not content themselves with the purchase of prisoners made in war, but kidnapped promising young Italians.

A. U. C. 731.  
B. C. 23.  
Aet. 19.

To this period belongs a bust in the Capitoline Museum (Fig. 58), as does also one in the Lateran at a slightly younger age. Both represent him with much the same character as do those of him later in life. The hair is worn down the back of the neck. There is refinement in the face, great sensitiveness, and not a little sadness. Let it be compared with that of the young Octavius, and it will be seen to differ from it at all points. The young Octavius had a determined mouth, and that of the young Tiberius is nervous and tremulous. There is in Octavius a wonderful balance of all the parts. This is lacking in Tiberius. He has a finely developed brain, but the face draws rapidly

to a point at the chin, indicative of weakness. The face of Octavius is cold and hard, that of Tiberius is full of feeling and gentleness; there is in the distressed eye and brow an appeal to one's compassion. There is in it the look of a boy who has suffered. That of Octavius has the eagle glance of the youth who believes in his own powers; but there are diffidence and a desire to be hid from all eyes, a doubt of his ability, in Tiberius. His is the face of one with a clinging, loving nature, afraid of hurting others as of being hurt himself.

Gregorovius, steeped in the traditional view of Tiberius as a monster, writes: 'His head is full of intellect, and is nobly formed. The mouth infinitely refined and beautiful; one can never forget that head (the Chiaramonti bust) after having once seen it. One expected something so different,—the face of a devil,—and is startled to see the delicacy of feature of a woman, which might suit a Sardanapalus. Only



FIG. 58.—TIBERIUS. Bust in the Capitoline Museum.

when aged does a deep, sharp expression of scorn and scepticism trace itself about the mouth, and this expression assumes something repellent in its stiffness, its hard-hearted reserve, its vulgarity even! Thus does the colossal head at Naples reveal him; so also his busts in the Capitol. In youth, his features are Dionysian, and the form of his body is full and feminine.'

As military tribune Tiberius was sent into Spain to suppress a revolt of the turbulent Cantabri, and this was the opening of his career as an able and brilliant general. Immediately after the subjugation of the Cantabri he was hurried into Armenia, where he recovered the eagles lost by Crassus thirty-three or thirty-four years before, and laid them at the feet of his stepfather.

This created great enthusiasm in Rome. Medals were struck to commemorate the achievement, and the poets composed verses in

A. U. C. 733.  
B. C. 21.  
Aet. 21.



FIG. 59.—**TIBERIUS** Bust in British Museum

celebration of the wiping away of the disgrace that had stained the arms of Rome. It has been conjectured that the embossed figures on the armour of the beautiful statue of Augustus found in Livia's villa at Prima Porta (Fig. 46) represent the subjection of the Parthians by her dearly loved son.

As Tiberius returned from this war he passed over the battle-field of Philippi, and was greeted by mysterious omens, strange sounds in the air, as of the clash of arms, and the springing up of a flame on the altar erected by Antony on the battle-field. These omens, we are informed, profoundly moved the soul of Tiberius. He was not suffered to remain long in Rome on his return, but was ordered to depart for Transalpine Gaul, and he had hardly entered on his charge there before he was called away to chastise the Rhaetians and Vindelicians of the Alps, those mountaineers who, at intervals driven by necessity to migrate, sought to win for themselves habitations on the plains at the foot of their mountains. They inhabited the chain from the Engadine through the Dolomites to the source of the Drau. The resolve of Augustus was thoroughly to exterminate these menacing barbarians, and the campaign against them was organised and executed in a very thorough manner; whilst Tiberius attacked the enemy from the north, his brother Drusus was required to scale their fastnesses from the south. The defeat of the

mountaineers was complete, and was followed by the merciless slaughter of all who could be captured, as the only means whereby Italy could be relieved from constant aggression.

The successes of the brothers are sung in two odes of Horace. Whilst this was going on in the Alps, Augustus was in Gaul, and he remained there also the following year. Tiberius turned his arms against the Taurisci of the Upper Danube, and then returned to Rome for his consulship.

Tiberius had a wife, Vipsania, the daughter of Agrippa, the lifelong friend of Augustus, by his first wife, the daughter of Pomponius Atticus, Cicero's constant friend and correspondent. He had been betrothed to her at an early age, by the desire of Augustus, who sought as far as possible to unite the supporter of his throne with his family. Tiberius had married Vipsania as soon as she had reached a fitting age, and he was warmly attached to her. Indeed, as Suetonius tells us, she suited him admirably. In the year 11 B.C. Vipsania gave Tiberius a son, who was named Drusus, and she was expecting to become a mother again when a great misfortune fell on the young couple. Agrippa, Vipsania's father and husband of Julia, died in 12 B.C., and Augustus and Livia resolved that in his place Tiberius should be the husband of Julia. For this he was unprepared. Not only was he deeply attached to Vipsania, but he knew the character of Julia. Augustus and his mother pressed him to separate from his wife. Tiberius had not the

A.U.C. 739.  
B.C. 15.  
Act. 27.

A.U.C. 741.  
B.C. 13.  
Act. 29.

A.U.C. 743.  
B.C. 11.  
Act. 31.



force of character of Caesar, who risked life and possessions rather than part with the woman he loved. After long struggle, Tiberius yielded, 'not without great anguish of mind,' says Suetonius, and married the young and dashing widow. But his affection for Vipsania endured. One day he happened to encounter her in the street, and by his intent look and filling eye it was seen that he was not reconciled to his loss. Augustus immediately had Vipsania married to Asinius Gallus, a



FIG. 60.—TIBERIUS. Bust at Berlin, No. 345. Acquired at Naples in 1842.

personal enemy of Tiberius, a pushing and self-satisfied man, of whom Augustus said that he was puffed with desire to be the first man in the senate, but lacked the wits to be what he desired.

If anything had been wanted to deepen the sadness that must have weighed on the mind of Tiberius at this time it was the whisper that Vipsania had been false to him, and that Drusus was not in reality his son, but the son of Asinius Gallus, to whom she was married after the separation. This latter insinuation we can, through the testimony

of the portrait busts, reject unhesitatingly. Drusus is unmistakably the son of Tiberius. Did the unfortunate man believe this story—set afloat, may be, so as to make him less dissatisfied with his new wife? We cannot tell. Whether he believed it or not, the seed of doubt in the fidelity of the woman he had loved and trusted remained to embitter his heart and breed in him mistrust of others.

The marriage of Tiberius with Julia was the most unhappy of that time. The pride, the frivolity, the wantonness of Julia, of which he knew, though it was concealed from her father, combined to set him against the wife forced on him. And yet he made an attempt to fulfil his duty towards her, and for a little while their union was outwardly harmonious. Julia 'treated him with contempt, as one beneath her in rank,' says Tacitus. She could not forget that, when she had made advances towards him some years previously, he had repelled her with disgust; nor could she forgive the manifest reluctance with which he had consented to take her hand.

She bore him a son on a journey undertaken together through Upper Italy to Aquileia, but the child died early, and with his death the semblance of harmony vanished. Julia would not abandon her dissolute life, and a separation ensued. For five years Tiberius and Julia remained linked together outwardly, alienated, hating each other at heart. Meantime the sons of Julia were winning their way with the emperor, the court, and the people of Rome. Bright, handsome boys, with intelligence and good spirits, they accompanied Augustus everywhere, and he looked on them with undisguised pride. One day, it is said, he caught Caius, the elder, reading a work of Cicero's, and when the boy would have concealed it, Augustus encouraged him to continue the perusal, saying, with a pensive smile, 'He was a great man, and truly loved his country.'

Brief as the career of these youths was destined to be, there is reason to think that they were moved neither by the token of magnanimity shown them by their grandfather, nor by the patriotism of the author they surreptitiously devoured. Lucius, the younger, intoxicated by the acclamations which greeted him on his casual appearance in the theatre, urged the emperor to elevate his brother to the consulship before he had yet assumed the garb of manhood, and asserted as precedent the case of Augustus himself, who had been invested with the office before the legal age. But the prince replied: 'May the gods grant that no such emergency shall again occur as that which compelled me to become consul before I was twenty years old.' 'A magistracy,' he added, 'should be given to such only as have learned in the school of life to control their own passions and those of the people.'

Drusus had been engaged on more or less successful, but always unprofitable, campaigns in Germany, and Tiberius had been in Pannonia, guarding the frontiers against the incursions of the Dacians. Then

Drusus died from the effects of a fall from his horse, and Tiberius was forced to take the command of the legions on the Rhine.

In B.C. 8 he had crossed that river and chastised the Sigambri, but, acting in accordance with the wishes of Augustus, abstained from advancing the frontier beyond it. This effected, he returned to Rome, to be at once involved in domestic troubles and court intrigue. Reckless and daring by nature, the princess Julia, exulting in the splendour of her position, freed from the irksome presence of her grave and reserved husband, overflowing with animal spirits, had given full rein to her caprices whilst Tiberius was in Germany. On his arrival in Rome, Tiberius found his wife the subject of gibe and lampoon, and his own position with Augustus undermined.

He resolved to depart from the scene of his domestic dishonour to the solitude of Rhodes. Augustus invested him in B.C. 6 with the tribunician power, but this mark of honour shown him hastened his departure, for it roused the jealousy of the two princes and their mother. Tiberius, now in his thirty-seventh year, an approved general in the field, a wise governor of provinces, felt himself slighted in the court, subjected to the impertinences of the princes of Julian blood, and coolly received by the people. Augustus himself, who had fallen more completely than ever under the influence of his daughter, was irritated against him by Julia's insinuations or complaints, for she represented the domestic disagreement as due wholly to the aversion towards herself felt by the stubborn Tiberius. The party of Julia, and those uncertain adherents who veered with the wind, seeing this estrangement of the prince from his stepson, treated Tiberius with cutting discourtesy; and Roman society laughed over the 'easy-going' husband who allowed his wife full swing to follow her dissolute fancies.

A. U. C. 748.  
B. C. 6.  
Aet. 36.

Among the charges against Tiberius whispered into the ear of Augustus by Julia, was one that her husband was ambitious, and sought to displace her sons by Agrippa, whom he viewed with a malevolent eye. Augustus called his son-in-law to task for this. It was in vain for Tiberius to protest his innocence. At last he sent to the Vestal Virgins for his will, that had been consigned to their custody, tore it open before the emperor, and showed him that he had made generous and kindly mention of these princes in his testament. But this was unavailing to completely dispel the mistrust sown by Julia.

The elevation of Tiberius to the tribunician power, conferred on him for five years as a reward for his services in Germany, was regarded as technically equivalent to association in authority with Augustus, and this aroused the furious jealousy of the young princes who arrogated all favours to themselves.

The same scenes ensued as had been enacted previously when the young Marcellus was envious of the advancement of Agrippa. The

prudent Maecenas, the only man who would have been able to mediate between the rival parties, was, unfortunately, no longer present. He had died shortly before the return of Tiberius to Rome, and Julia had a free hand for her intrigues against her detested husband. She did her utmost with her father, who had never liked Tiberius, whose character he neither understood nor appreciated. It was, therefore, easy to induce the emperor to dismiss the disturber of domestic tranquillity from Rome, on some plea or other.

Accordingly, hardly had Tiberius been invested by Augustus with the tribunician power than he received orders to depart for Armenia, which had been invaded by the Parthians. Tiberius felt himself hurt by this commission, the purport of which he well understood. Had he spoken out to Augustus, told him plainly what his feelings were, opened his eyes to the conduct of Julia, Augustus in all probability would have had the sound sense to have curbed the insolence of his daughter, and taken measures to put restraint on her conduct. But Tiberius was not the man to act thus; he harboured his grievances in his own bosom, and said nothing. He had behaved towards the prince with unfailing deference, he had sacrificed his domestic happiness to his wishes, he had maintained the credit of Rome by his achievements in the field, and had never asked to have his services recognised, never pushed his claims to notice; he had been submissive to the wishes of Augustus, and doubtless now the emperor reckoned on his unmurmuring obedience. For once, however, he had miscalculated.

Tiberius was not the man to loudly proclaim his wrongs; that was not in his nature; he did not dare act as had Agrippa in the same position,—accept the mission and remain in or near Italy, whilst discharging the mission confided to him through his agents. He was no Agrippa—he knew that well enough; Augustus owed everything to Agrippa, and the latter might venture on such a course, but not he. Weighed down with disappointment, disgust at the gossip of the capital, wretched in his domestic relations, cut to the quick by the insolence of the youths, and disappointed at the coldness of Augustus, whom he loved with filial devotion, he suddenly resolved to retire wholly from political life, and take rest in an island where he might pursue his literary and scientific hobbies.

To the amazement of all the world, and of Augustus above every one, Tiberius declined the mission to Armenia, protested that his health demanded retirement and tranquillity, and solicited permission to depart to Rhodes. No representations of his mother, not even the earnest entreaties of the emperor, who complained in the senate that his stepson was deserting him, could induce Tiberius to alter his purpose. With that toughness of resolve and wilfulness that constituted an element of his nature, and was, in fact, a token of weakness of



character, which is slow to form a resolution, clinging desperately to a resolution when formed, he attempted to starve himself to death, when Augustus refused his consent. The emperor gave way only when he found that his son-in-law had been already four days without food.

To this period of his life belongs the bust of Tiberius at Berlin, brought in 1842 from Naples. Some hesitation has been felt as to whether it is genuine, and not a Renaissance sculpture. Also the bust in the Louvre, of whose genuineness no doubt has been entertained.<sup>1</sup> There is in both an expression of unhappiness, which disappears in later busts and statues.

The surprise and dismay caused by the step of Tiberius were general. Hitherto every praiseworthy action of his had been misrepresented and repaid with scurrility, his kindness translated as want of strength, his magnanimity as fear, his care for justice to the poor as popularity-hunting; but now that he threatened to leave the field wholly open to the boys Caius and Lucius, senate and people alike felt that one great and main prop of the state was taken away. People could not understand the step and explain it. It was not prompted by ambition, that was self-evident, and no one felt how seriously this act would jeopardise his future so fully as his own mother. The old historians enter into conjectures to account for the withdrawal of Tiberius. 'In the prime of life and in robust health,' says Suetonius, 'he suddenly formed the resolution of withdrawing to a great distance from Rome. It is uncertain whether this was the result of disgust for his wife, whom he durst neither denounce nor divorce, and the connection with whom became daily more intolerable, or to prevent that indifference towards him, which his constant residence in the city might produce, or in the hope of supporting and improving by absence his authority in the state, if the public should have occasion for his services. Some were of opinion that, as the sons of Augustus were now come to maturity, he voluntarily relinquished his place as second in the government, as Agrippa had done before him. This is the reason Tiberius himself alleged later for his retirement; but his pretext at the time was that he was satiated with honours.' Tacitus says that 'no motive was so cogent with him' as the conduct of Julia. 'He was,' says Tacitus (vi. 51), 'put in a dilemma from which he did not know how to free himself. If he remained in Rome, he seemed to connive at his wife's misconduct, and he had not the courage to draw the veil from the eyes of Augustus and divorce Julia for her misconduct.'

That Tiberius was too proud and too considerate to tell his father-in-law the real cause of his desire to depart, is not a reason why we should blame him. Augustus felt that a slur was cast on his daughter when Tiberius declined to allow her to accompany him to Rhodes; he resented this as an 'insult' (*contumelia*) offered to himself.

<sup>1</sup> Berlin, No. 345; Louvre, No. 2430.



FIG. 6r.—TIBERIUS. Bust in the Louvre.

Tiberius departed; he said farewell to his most intimate friends alone, and he took with him but a small retinue. His loved child Drusus he was constrained to leave in Rome as some mitigation of the slight cast on Julia. Among his closest associates were three men, Vescularius Flaccus, Julius Marinus, and above all the senator Lucilius Longus, a self-made man, to whom perhaps alone did the reserved Tiberius open his whole mind. These three accompanied him to Rhodes. Of Flaccus, who was a member of the equestrian order, we know almost nothing. The same may be said of Marinus; but we are told a little more of Longus, 'who held faithfully to Tiberius in good and bad days,' says Tacitus. When, many years later, this old friend died, Tiberius bewailed his loss as one of the greatest sorrows of his life, and gave him a censor's public funeral. It is remarkable to find the Claudian, this scion of a patrician and haughty family, taking his most intimate associates out of an inferior, though equally cultured class. Tiberius had no sooner arrived at Ostia, and was preparing to embark, than news reached him that Augustus was ill, and he sailed slowly along the Campanian coast, calling at intervals on his way for tidings of the health of his stepfather. But even this was turned to his disadvantage, for it was reported in Rome that he was delaying his voyage in hopes of hearing of the death of Augustus. When Tiberius was told of this he at once spread sail and left Italy and its malignant gossip in his wake. As he anchored in Paros, he obtained possession of a beautiful statue of Vesta, the goddess of the domestic hearth, and sent it to Rome to be erected in the temple of Concord; a significant incident, that gives us a glimpse into that wounded and solitary heart flying from a dishonoured home and from the malignity of the rival members of the same household.<sup>1</sup>

From his thirty-sixth to his forty-third year Tiberius remained in retreat at Rhodes. He had halted in this island on his way back to Italy from his Armenian expedition, and had probably then been attracted by its situation. For eighteen years he had been engaged in campaigns in the remotest regions of the empire; sorrow and humiliation had been his share in his domestic life; he had lost his only brother, to whom he was devotedly attached, and he was wearied out with struggle against the factions, the elements of opposition in the imperial household, headed by his own wife. His powers of resistance were gone, his ambition was disappointed, a listless discouragement had come over his heart, and all he sought was rest in solitude. Throughout his life this passion to be away from the stir of life, and to be alone with his own thoughts and with his books, manifested itself spasmodically.

In Rhodes Tiberius occupied a modest house in the city, and had a villa in the country, sufficient to accommodate him and his little com-

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, *N. H.* vii. 48

pany of associates, mostly men of learning and literature. He walked quietly without retinue about the streets of Rhodes, visited acquaintances there, and attended the schools. Once only did he show himself to be invested with magisterial authority, and that was when, in the schools one day, one of the disputants grossly insulted him, while attempting to reconcile a quarrel. Tiberius withdrew without a word, but summoned the insolent Greek to appear before his tribunal, and sent him to prison. Another anecdote relative to his stay in the island is more favourable. He happened one day to say to his attendants that he was going to see the sick in Rhodes, probably meaning some sick friends or servants. But his attendants misunderstood him, and communicated with the authorities in the town, who, with officious promptitude, sent to the houses and brought out all the sick people into a public portico and ranged them there in their beds, classified according to their maladies. When Tiberius arrived, he was greatly disconcerted, and for some moments remained uncertain what to do; but, rallying, he went from one to another of the patients, 'even to the meanest,' and inquired into their condition, and 'apologised for the mistake that had been made.'

Amongst his acquaintances at Rhodes was Theodorus of Gadara, who had taught him elocution in Rome, and who was now retired in his old age to the island. Tiberius ever had an inclination for letters, and Horace addresses him as one of a little company of students (*Ep.* i. 3).

Years passed, and Tiberius wearied at length of his exile. The main cause of his retirement was taken away. Julia had been indicted, disgraced, and banished, and with her Sempronius Gracchus, his deadly enemy. But if the eyes of Augustus had been opened to the wrong-doing of his daughter, and to the motives that had induced his son-in-law to retire from Rome, his irritation against him was not abated. He had humbled himself before Tiberius in entreating him to remain in the public service, and had been refused. He resented the silence of Tiberius in not confessing to him his real motives for withdrawal to Rhodes, and thus enabling him to check the evil before it had reached a head.

Tiberius, on hearing of the terrible disclosures that had taken place, and of the wrath of the emperor, had written to him, as himself the most injured of the two, and as the one most responsible for his wife, to urge some mitigation in the sentence on the wretched creature, and to insist on her being allowed the enjoyment of all the estates and the annuity he had given her in former days. 'He thought it incumbent on him,' says Suetonius, 'in point of decency to interpose in her behalf by frequent letters to Augustus.' Even this interference is misrepresented as an act of hypocrisy. It did not occur to the historian as possible that so grievously wronged a man could feel pity for the woman

A.U.C. 751.

B.C. 3.

Act. 39.



who was fallen, and who had embittered his life. Tiberius now proposed to return to Rome, but to his surprise and consternation was informed by Augustus that his voluntary exile was now converted into one involuntary. He must remain in Rhodes, and 'need not concern himself about his friends, whom he professed to be so desirous of seeing again.'

This blow was crushing. Now only did Tiberius recognise what a political blunder he had made five years before in leaving the coast clear for the machinations of his adversaries. His tribunician power expired, and it was with difficulty that Livia was able to obtain for her son only the title and dignity of a legate, so that his position at Rhodes might be in some measure raised above that of a private individual, and some decent disguise might be thrown over the fact that he was in exile and in disgrace. Tiberius was made to feel that he was out of favour. The princes of Asia Minor were forbidden to visit him. He was surrounded by spies. He therefore withdrew to his villa in the country, and lived there in the utmost seclusion. To avoid every occasion of offence, he did not receive any of the governors of provinces, or even private Roman travellers who landed at Rhodes. On hearing, however, that Caius, the eldest grandson of Augustus, was at Samos, on his way to the East, he visited him. The experienced soldier of forty-one was constrained to stoop before his own stepson, aged nineteen, to ask his intercession with the emperor. He was but coldly received, for Marcus Lollius, the tutor of Caius, was a diligent fomentor of rivalry between the two houses, and he had prejudiced his pupil against Tiberius.

Then Tiberius learned that malicious representations had been made to Augustus that he had been intriguing with the old legions he had commanded in Germany. Tiberius at once wrote to Augustus to request that the prince would send any trusty man he pleased to be with him as his keeper, who could report to his master every act and word of his life.

The two remaining years of his banishment were sad enough. Brooding over the injustice done him, feeling himself unable to meet and refute the malignant inventions of his enemies, grieving at his separation from Augustus, whom, through all discouragement, he loved sincerely, Tiberius withdrew into deeper solitude and silence.<sup>1</sup> He gave up his wonted amusements—riding, shooting, fencing, abandoned even his stately Roman habit and assumed the lighter garb of the Greek, and was told by letters from Rome that 'society' sneered at him for his weak-spirited resignation of all his claims. In the Roman colony of Nemausus, the modern Nîmes, the capital of the province in which he

<sup>1</sup> The conduct of Tiberius is intelligible enough. Tacitus, however, says of it: 'et Rhodi secreto vitare coetus, recondere voluptates insuerat.'—*Ann.* iv. 57. At that licentious period did it need retirement and secrecy to be dissolute?

had formerly commanded, the people threw down his statues. A favourite of Prince Caius at a banquet one evening turned to the young man and said, 'Say the word, and I will start for Rhodes and bring you back his head.'

An accident proved favourable to Tiberius. Lollius, who had been tutor to Caius in the East, had made himself obnoxious to his pupil, probably by his strictness: he was accused of extortion, and, to escape a trial, committed suicide. He was succeeded by Quirinius, who was friendly to Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> On his way to the East he made a visit to the exile, probably by order of Augustus, and, on proceeding to Caius in Syria, induced him to withdraw his opposition to the return of his stepfather. Livia, also, used her best endeavours to obtain the recall of Tiberius.

Tiberius knew that a final effort on his behalf was being made, and he walked daily to a headland to look out over the blue Cretan sea for the sail that would bring him tidings of his release, or confirm his exile. One day an eagle perched on his roof, a sign he hoped that better times were coming. One morning the electric sparks flashed as he assumed his clothes, and that also he supposed was a sure token of good. He was attended constantly by the philosopher and astrologer Thrasyllus, who professed to read men's fortunes in the stars, and who had buoyed up his master with hopes. On the last day of his exile, Tiberius was standing with this man on the edge of a cliff, as usual looking wistfully westward, and listening to the words of Thrasyllus, when, so it was said,<sup>2</sup> a sudden impatience came over Tiberius, and an inclination to throw the prophet of good things over the cliffs; but at that moment a sail glittered in the sun on the horizon. It brought to Tiberius the wished-for recall, but under the condition that he should exercise no public functions in Rome, living there merely as a private individual.

Before Tiberius had left Rome, seven years previously, he had proved his value to the state, given evidence of his brilliant abilities, and perhaps he may have since proved that his absence caused no sensible inconvenience. 'But it is the way of the world, that no sooner does one man step out of the fore-front than another steps into his place, and the man who has stepped out is forgotten,' says Stahr. This Tiberius found to be true on his reappearance in Rome. He was without rank and influence, pointedly excluded from participation in public affairs. One only satisfaction he had on his return—to find his house purified from the stain that had rested on it.

The condition of affairs in Rome rapidly altered after the return of Tiberius, and he was forced once more into notice. Augustus had lost

<sup>1</sup> P. Sulpicius Quirinius, the 'Cyrenius' of St. Luke ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius and Tacitus have a wonderful faculty for seeing into the minds of men, and they tell with confidence what were their purposes and plans.

his old friends and advisers Agrippa and Maecenas, his sister's son Marcellus, and his favourite stepson Drusus. Julia, his only daughter, was in banishment, and two of his grandchildren, the crazy Agrippa Postumus, and the dissolute Julia, who was treading in her mother's steps, caused him great concern. Then ensued the death of Lucius at Marseilles, A.D. 2, coinciding almost immediately with the arrival of Tiberius in Rome, and eighteen months later, Caius died in Lycia (Feb. 21, A.D. 4). It is hardly to be wondered at that the deaths of these princes following so rapidly on each other, and synchronising with the recall of Tiberius, stunning as they were to the Julian faction, should set their tongues running, and that they should accuse Livia and Tiberius of having contrived these deaths.

A. U. C. 757.  
A. D. 4.  
Aet. 45.

Augustus, now aged sixty-seven, was deeply distressed by this loss, which destroyed his hopes of building up a dynasty in his family. No other course was now left open to him than that of withdrawing Tiberius from obscurity and associating him along with himself in the drudgery of government. He adopted him and Agrippa Postumus, on the same day, June 27, in a full assembly of the senate, and he accompanied the adoption of his stepson with the solemn asseveration that 'he did this in the interest of the state.' To make the bond more complete, he required Tiberius to likewise adopt Germanicus, then aged eighteen, his nephew, the son of his deceased brother Drusus. It is deserving of notice that on the death of Lucius, Augustus had at once offered to adopt Tiberius in his place, but that Tiberius had declined the honour, thinking it might annoy Caius, to whose consent he owed his return.<sup>1</sup> But when Caius was also dead, every reason for refusal was removed.

Although Tiberius had been thus taken into the Julian family and accepted as a son by Augustus, he took no advantage of his position. He maintained the utmost reserve, behaved with singular diffidence, and passed his adoption over, as though it were a form void of political significance. The insanity of Agrippa, though suspected, had not as yet become acknowledged and confirmed.

Augustus needed his help. He was uneasy about the German frontier. Since the last campaign conducted by Tiberius in this quarter, the Romans had acquired substantial advantages beyond the Rhine. The ambition of every commander at the head of the legions at Moguntiacum was to make of the Elbe the frontier stream of the empire in place of the Rhine. Augustus was but half satisfied with the proposed enlargement of the realm in that direction, and he desired that Tiberius should in person investigate the advisability of such an extension. Accordingly, immediately on his adoption, Tiberius was despatched to the Rhine, and in a rapid and brilliant campaign he subjugated all those tribes that occupied the forests between the Lower Rhine and the Weser,

<sup>1</sup> Vell. Paterc. ii. 103.

He fixed his winter camp near the sources of the Lippe in the great Teutoburger Forest, and then returned over the Alps to report progress to Augustus.

Early in the spring of the following year, he was again with his legions, and he organised a combined expedition by sea and land, by means of a flotilla, long since prepared on the Rhine, now sent along the shores of the Northern Ocean, to enter and ascend the Elbe. He proposed to dismay the enemy by taking them in rear whilst he advanced against them through the woods and over the sandy downs, till he could reach hands to those despatched with the fleet. This remarkable combination was carried into execution according to his directions. The terrified natives were unable to pluck up courage to resist, and fled to the further bank of the Elbe. Thence an aged chief put forth in a canoe, and on reaching the middle of the sluggish river asked leave to be led before the Roman general. Conducted to the tent of Tiberius, he surveyed him for a while with silent admiration, and then exclaimed, 'Madness is it for us to contend against the invisible divinities of the Romans, and not to make submission at once. By the grace of Caesar, I have this day been suffered to see a god, a privilege I never before attained, or hoped to attain.' Thus saying, he asked permission to touch the hand of the figure before him radiant in glittering armour, and with a countenance of a beauty unknown in his savage cabins. Flattery there no doubt was in this act, but there was also homage to the genius of the great general, and to his personal appearance.

Having reached the Elbe, Tiberius retired content with his bloodless achievement, and satisfied in his own mind that it would be, as his adopted father would say, 'fishing for minnows with a golden hook,' if he sought to annex the unproductive wastes of Lower Germany.

He accordingly exchanged his post on the Rhine for the command of the legions on the Danube, where the frontier was menaced by the Marcomanni, who occupied the singular basin, like a lunar crater, of the modern kingdom of Bohemia. Seated at the springs of the Moldau and Elbe, the Marcomanni were a menace to Noricum and Vindelicia, the southerly and smiling regions they coveted. Tiberius planted himself at Carnuntum, a little below Vienna, and summoned Saturninus, in command of the legions on the Rhine, to strike to the east through the natural gate in the mountains between Fürth and Pilsen, whilst he himself marched in a north-westerly direction from Carnuntum.

This bold combined movement, daringly conceived, approached success. Tiberius was within five marches of the enemy's border; and Saturninus was already threatening the mountain passes of the Böhmer Wald, when Tiberius was disconcerted by the report of an insurrection in his rear. He stayed his advance, and without divulging the news

A.U.C. 758.  
A.D. 5.  
Act. 46.

A.U.C. 759.  
A.D. 6.  
Act. 47.



that had reached him, offered the alarmed Marcomanni terms before attacking them, and these they eagerly accepted.

The two Roman armies were ordered to retreat simultaneously, and they regained their provinces without having fought a battle. Thus Tiberius had succeeded in effecting his ends in two campaigns without bloodshed, and by the same masterly methods.

The flame of revolt kindled in Pannonia ran through Dalmatia and Illyricum. The immediate cause for the outbreak was the raising of levies for enrolment in the army on the Danube. Combining under two chiefs, Bato and Pinnetus, the insurgents attacked and overpowered the Roman cohorts stationed in their country, and threatened Italy, where most accessible, at the head of the Adriatic. In ten days it was feared they would be in Rome. The consternation became general. The veterans were summoned to take arms and leave their ploughs, and every noble household was required to furnish a contingent of thoroughly equipped freedmen for military service. In the general terror slaves were enfranchised in vast numbers, and then as hastily armed and sent to the frontier. Tiberius was recalled from the Danube to hover on the rear of the advancing army of rebels, and Germanicus was put at the head of the levies collected in Italy. Thus hemmed in by two hosts, the insurgents were alarmed, and offered but a feeble resistance, retreating from the plains and maintaining a guerilla warfare in the mountains. The final subjugation of the rebels took place in A.D. 9. When Bato was led captive into the presence of Tiberius, and asked the reason of the revolt, he replied, 'It is your own doing, ye Romans, for you have not sent among us shepherds and dogs to protect us, but wolves to prey on us.'

The conduct of Tiberius in the prosecution of his campaigns has been described for us no doubt with a touch of flattery, but with substantial truth, by Velleius Paterculus, who had served under him. 'There was no ostentation in his conduct; it was remarkable for its solid virtue and practical quality, agreeable to experience, and exemplary in its humanity. During the whole of the German and Pannonian wars Caesar took as much care of every one of us who happened to be sick as though his health and recovery were the chief object of his solicitude, though his mind was necessarily engaged on an infinite variety of troublesome matters. A carriage was in attendance for such as needed it, also a litter for general use, of which I, as well as many others, experienced the benefit. Physicians, suitable food, warm baths, were always ready as contributions to the health of all. . . . The general frequently admonished, rarely punished; taking a middle part, dissembling his knowledge of most faults, and preventing the commission of others. . . . In all this great German war what struck me as most noble and admirable was the way in which the general never rushed on a great success which would be bought by the loss of many

lives. He ever judged that the safest means were also the most honourable, and he preferred the approval of his own conscience to the acquisition of renown; nor were his counsels ever swayed by the feelings of the army, but the army was directed by the wisdom of the commander.'

Five days after the conclusion of the war in Pannonia and Dalmatia the terrible news of the loss of the Roman legions in Germany under Varus reached the capital of the world. Three legions were cut to pieces, as many troops of cavalry. Tiberius, in consideration of the national humiliation, postponed his triumph. He was not the man to care for glitter and pomp. It was feared—it was hardly doubted—that the Germans who had exterminated the legions in the Teutoburger Wald would be joined by the Marcomanni, and that the insurrection hardly subdued in Pannonia and Illyricum would flame up afresh.

A.U.C. 763. At the head of levies Tiberius hurried to the Rhine, and  
A.D. 10. spent the year in the fortification of all points menaced,  
Aet. 51. and in the accumulation of stores. Not till the following year, A.D. 11, did he cross the Rhine, nor was it then with any intention of conquest or annexation, but of impressing respect for the Roman arms on the exultant barbarians. The twenty-four-year-old Germanicus accompanied his uncle and adoptive father on this raid. Never was Tiberius greater as a general than on this occasion. The soldiers under him were burning with resentment and desire of revenge. They were impatient to pursue the enemy to their last strongholds; but Tiberius knew the dangers that were before and around him, and he displayed a caution which, in the eyes of the impetuous, was treated as deficiency in courage. He was not now at the head of veteran and experienced soldiers, but of newly enlisted freedmen and peasants, who could not be trusted where the tried soldiers of Varus had been mown down. For the first time in his life he summoned a council of war, and laid his plans before it and invited discussion.

'Having to cross the Rhine, he restricted the whole convoy within certain limits, and, stationing himself on the river-bank, searched every waggon before it was suffered to pass over, to assure himself that it carried nothing but what was necessary or allowed. Beyond the Rhine he took his meals on the bare ground, often passed the night without a tent, and his regular orders for the day, as well as those given on sudden emergencies, were invariably given in writing, with injunctions that should there be any doubt as to their meaning, he was to be applied to personally, at any hour of night as well as day. He maintained the strictest discipline. It was his desire to leave as little as possible to chance. He always engaged the enemy with more confidence when in the night-watches his lamp failed and went out, as he said this was an omen of success in his family that never belied him or his ancestors.'

<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Tib.* 18, 19.

In the autumn of A.D. 12, having sufficiently vindicated the honour of Rome, Tiberius returned to Italy, and, accompanied by Germanicus, had his deferred triumph. The Pannonian chief Bato walked in chains behind his chariot, and doubtless expected the usual treatment of captives who were drawn along in the procession of the emperor. When the triumphal car reached the capitol the captives had always been hurried off to the Tullianum, the gloomy vault cut out of the solid rock hard by, and there strangled. But it was not so on this occasion. Tiberius broke through this cruel custom, and sent Bato to finish his days at Ravenna, laden with presents. Tiberius now stood at the height of his fame. He was regarded in Rome as its deliverer; honours were heaped upon him, and he was recognised as the heir to the place of Augustus. The aged prince indeed could not conceal from himself that Tiberius was the only man in the family capable of holding the reins of government. He had learned to regard him not only as a general but as a statesman; and in spite of the difference of their characters, he had acquired a certain amount of affection for him. We possess fragments of his correspondence with Tiberius which reveal this. He calls Tiberius 'the only strength and stay of the empire.' One of his letters ended: 'Farewell, my dearest Tiberius; may good success attend you—you best of all generals—in all you undertake for me and for the Muses' (an allusion to his literary performances). In a third letter the old emperor wrote: 'You want to know my opinion relative to your summer quarters? In truth, my dear Tiberius, I do not think, situated as you were, and with an army so ill disposed for action, you could have behaved with greater prudence. All who were with you admit that this verse suits you:

A. U. C. 765.  
A. D. 12.  
Aet. 53.

One man by vigilance has restored the state.

Whenever anything happens that requires more than ordinary consideration, or when I am out of humour, then, by Hercules, I long for the presence of my dear Tiberius, and these lines of Homer rise up in my mind:

Bold from his prudence, I could e'en aspire  
To dare with him the burning rage of fire.

When I hear and read that you are worn out with incessant fatigue, the gods confound me, if I am not all in a quake! So I entreat you to spare yourself, lest, should we hear of your being ill, the news prove fatal to your mother and me, and the Roman people be alarmed for the safety of the empire. It matters naught how I be, so long as you are well. I pray heaven to preserve you for us, and bless you with health both now and ever,—if the gods care a rush for the Roman people.'

Notwithstanding his regard, as already intimated, Augustus never quite understood Tiberius. Their different characters and qualities of mind and heart manifested themselves in difference of conduct.

Augustus laid great stress on a good-humoured, easy familiarity with every one, and he disliked the proud reserve of Tiberius, as likely to offend. He went so far as to apologise to the people and senate for this manner of his adopted son, which was so uncongenial to himself, as 'a natural peculiarity born in him, and not due to any defect in his inner self.'

He himself felt restraint in the presence of Tiberius; he was fond, in the circle of his friends, of indulging his frolicsome humour, in a way perhaps inconsistent with his dignity. But no sooner did his stepson enter the room than he desisted from this relaxation.

For the next two years after the conclusion of the Pannonian war, Tiberius remained in Rome, whilst his nephew Germanicus took his place on the Rhine. After eight years of incessant warfare he required

A.U.C. 767.

A.D. 14.

Aet. 55.

repose. But this repose was not to last long. In A.D. 14, fresh troubles broke out in Illyricum, and Augustus deemed it advisable to send him thither. The old prince accompanied him as far as Beneventum, and then turned to Nola, the family seat of the Octavian family, where he fell ill. Tiberius was hastily recalled by Livia, and arrived in time to receive the dying commands of Augustus.

To the period of reconciliation with Augustus belongs a series of busts and statues that present a different expression of face from those belonging to the epoch when he was full of heartache relative to his domestic troubles. It is possible that there may have been a certain idealisation in them, but for all that we cannot fail to observe that this change of expression exactly coincides with the lifting from off his heart of the weight which had produced the former look of pain.

Of these, there may be instanced three, the splendid Tiberius, seated with baton in his right hand and short sword in his left, in the Vatican Museum, found at Veii in 1811 (Fig. 80). This statue has been a puzzle to those who have accepted the traditional view of the character of Tiberius. The Cavaliere Massi says: 'There is in this an aspect of intellect and clemency hard to reconcile with our idea of this tyrant, the execrable successor of Augustus.' Viktor Riedberg comments on his portraits thus: 'His is not a low mind, but one fallen low down, and we think of a prostrate archangel as we see it.<sup>1</sup> In the same gallery we find a colossal statue in Pentelic marble,—Tiberius as an Olympian god. It makes the impression of greatness, but the artist's effort to give it something of the benignant majesty of Zeus has stranded on the impossible. The enthroned statue has an affected sweet smile, as though an effort were being made to express goodness that did not exist, while the finely cut underlip that rises from the strangely marked hollow over the chin seems to emphasise with a dash of contempt the con-

<sup>1</sup> He is referring here to the colossal bust, No. 99, beside the statue, also found at Veii in 1811.



scious superiority that lies in the broad magnificently-formed forehead.' Mayor says merely: 'The expression is serious, calm, gentle, such as is found more or less in all the portraits of Tiberius.' To me, Viktor Riedberg is wrong in every particular. I see nothing of affectation in the smile: Tiberius was not a man of affectation. His stern gravity was what Augustus disliked; if a look of gentleness and a faint smile broke out on his face when he was happy—was it not natural? The cloud of



FIG. 62.—TIBERIUS Bust in the Louvre.

imperial anger had rolled away. His worth was universally recognised. The odious Julia no longer poisoned the atmosphere of his home. A ray of sunlight illumined his long-desolate heart, and it appears to me that under such conditions no affectation of repose and benignity was required. He was happy, and his face reflected his inner peace and brightness. Nor do I believe in the conscious superiority that Riedberg perceives in the mouth. What I see is the contrary—diffidence, mistrust of his own powers, exhibited everywhere save in the battle-field.

The second statue belonging to this epoch to which I refer is the torso in the Lateran, that belonged to a figure much in the same position as the statue in the Vatican (Fig. 69). There is, however, less character in this face; there is almost feminine beauty; the type of countenance is the same, but there is a lack of expression.

The third is the bust in the Louvre (Fig. 62), like the two former, crowned with oak leaves. In this the kindliness of the sensitive mouth is very marked, as well as the wonderful breadth of the brow. This portrait is not from the life, but for all that it is very valuable. It represents in an exaggerated manner the impress made by Tiberius on the mind of the sculptor. The head is over-broad, the mouth undersized. It stands in the same relation to the real Tiberius that one of Richmond's refined drawings does to the real face delineated. It is a portrait of the spiritualised man, apart from the sordid drudgery of life.

The resemblance of the profile of this portrait to that of Livia, his mother, in the sardonix at Florence (Fig. 71) is not to be mistaken.

### III.—TIBERIUS, EMPEROR.

TIBERIUS was in his fifty-sixth year when Augustus died. There could arise no question as to his right to step into the place vacated by his adoptive father. Two years before his death Augustus  
A. U. C. 767.  
 A. D. 14.  
 Act. 55. had obtained for him from the senate a renewal of his tribunician power, and had likewise given to him plenary proconsular authority over all the provinces, and had thus constituted him regent along with himself. Accordingly, on the death of the prince, Tiberius required the imperial guard to take the oath of allegiance to him, and sent orders to all the legions in the several provinces to do the same.

His position was, nevertheless, not free from care, and he said himself that he was in the situation of a man who held a wolf by the ears, which, unless restrained, would fly at him and tear him. For although he had no serious cause to fear that rivals would start up among the nobility of Rome outside the imperial family—though, indeed, the conspiracy of Libo showed that this danger did exist—yet the imperial house was itself torn into two furious parties, the Julian and the Claudian.

It was true that Tiberius had been taken by adoption into the Julian family, nevertheless he was looked upon as an interloper by the representatives of that Venus-born race. Who these representatives were we will now see.

Julia had become the mother of two daughters as well as of three sons by her husband, M. Vipsanius Agrippa. The sons were dead, the

younger Julia was banished for her dissolute conduct, but there remained Agrippina, born in or about B.C. 14, married to Germanicus, the eldest son of Drusus, therefore nephew of Tiberius, and Agrippina had inherited her father's determination and energy of character. Indeed, it would seem that all the wanton blood of her mother had drained away into the heart of her sister Julia, and that the heroic, resolute spirit of Agrippa had passed into the form of Agrippina. She, however, prided herself, not on the inheritance of ignoble Vipsanian blood, but on the sacred *ichor* of the Julian race. Scribonia was still alive, solacing her daughter in exile, and almost certainly constant, though secret, communications passed between these three women, all animated with hatred against Tiberius, and contempt for the Claudian blood. Agrippina passionately, devotedly, loved her husband, by whom she was the mother of a large family. She would doubtless have rejoiced to see Germanicus place himself at the head of the legions on the Rhine, and hurl Tiberius from the throne. But this, owing to the temper of her husband's mind, she was powerless to effect. All her ambitions therefore were directed to secure the succession for her own sons, to the exclusion of Drusus the younger, son of Tiberius.<sup>1</sup>

Tiberius entered Rome immediately after the death of Augustus, and appeared before the senate to solicit permission to have the deceased solemnly buried and canonised. He was anxious lest some great popular commotion should take place, as at the funeral of Caesar, lest the people should seize on the body of Augustus.

He therefore requested the senate to furnish a guard. A senator called out that Tiberius wanted a bodyguard for himself. Tiberius replied with dignity: 'There are soldiers, indeed—but they do not belong to me; they are the servants of the State.'

At the funeral, when he had to speak the panegyric of his father by adoption, suddenly his voice failed, he drew a heavy sigh and handed the copy of the speech to his son Drusus to read, as he could not command his feelings to proceed with it (*velut impar dolori*). Of course, the historians have made this out to be mere acting. They did not conceive it possible that this reserved man could have so tender and loving a heart, that he should break down at the funeral of perhaps the only man he really loved, as he was the only man who had really shown him kindness.

Then ensued a curious scene, which shall be given in the words of Tacitus:—

'As soon as the funeral of Augustus was over, the senate addressed

<sup>1</sup> The character of Agrippina is given by Tacitus in seven places. Germanicus urged her 'exueret ferociam,' *Ann.* ii. 72. Sejanus took pains to excite her 'tumidos spiritus,' iv. 12. 'Agrippina semper atrox,' iv. 52; 'pervicax irae,' 53; Sejanus goaded her on 'moerentem et improvidam,' 54; Tiberius 'arrogantiam oris et contumacem animum incusavit,' v. 3; 'Agrippina aequi impatiens, dominandi avida, virilibus curis feminarum vitia exuerat,' vi. 25.

itself in prayer to Tiberius (that he would assume the position of the deceased); but he replied evasively, descanting on the magnitude of the task of government, and his own unaspiring disposition. He said that the genius of the divine Augustus was alone capable of sustaining so burdensome a charge, and that, for his own part, having been made by him sharer in some of his duties, he had been able to learn by experience how onerous was the weight of responsibilities of a governor, and how capricious were the turns of fortune. He said it was fitter that the functions of administration should be divided among many, and the toil thus shared. He accordingly implored them not to throw the whole administration on him. Such was his speech, delivered with more dignity of sentiment than sincerity. But the words of Tiberius, even on subjects upon which he sought no disguise, were dark and cautious, whether from nature or from habit, and on this occasion they were more than usually ambiguous, as he laboured to hide his own heart. The senators, however, whose sole fear was lest they should seem to consent, burst into tears, complaints, and vows, and with extended arms supplicated the gods, invoked the image of Augustus, and embraced the knees of Tiberius. He then commanded the imperial register to be produced and recited. This contained a summary of the resources of the state, the number of Romans and of auxiliaries in the armies, the amount of the navy, kingdoms, provinces, tributes, customs, the public expenditure, and the largesses—all written by the hand of Augustus, and to it was appended his advice, that the empire should be maintained within fixed limits.<sup>1</sup>

According to Tacitus, the scene was a bit of absurd farce; but it is more in accordance with the character of Tiberius to believe that it was the result of a sudden weakness that came over him. In his mind he had resolved to step into the place of Augustus, but at the proper moment his courage failed him. He was accustomed to a camp, and could rule soldiers, but the senate was a body nominally independent, towards which the late prince had exhibited great deference, but with which Tiberius had had no dealings. A feeling of uncertainty, of self-mistrust, was an integral feature of the character of Tiberius, and again and again in his career do we come on instances of these fits of irresolution.

There is, however, another explanation of the hesitation of Tiberius. He was already possessed of full powers, as he held the proconsular *imperium* and the tribunician *potestas*, and he may have doubted the establishment of a precedent by accepting his nomination as prince from the senate. He was a stickler for legal forms at all times.<sup>1</sup>

Once more he urged that he was not capable of discharging all the duties of prince, and asked to have them divided. Asinius Gallus, an old foe, the husband of Vipsania, said, scoffing: 'Take your share

<sup>1</sup> See, on the constitution of the principate, Appendix I.



as you list.' 'It is not his place who shares to seize on his portion,' answered Tiberius. Probably he was out of health at this time; at all events, he gave out that he was ill, and showed himself little in public. One reason alleged for his weakness was, that he waited to see how affairs would turn out; another was that he did not wish it to appear that he had received the sovereignty from his mother, and he waited to have it formally granted to him by the senate. That he may have been really ill, no one allowed.

The scene in the senate-house ended without any formal resolution being taken, but with a general understanding that the government should continue in the hands of Tiberius, with all the functions acquired by his predecessor.

Whilst these events were occurring in Rome, a mutiny had broken out among the troops quartered in Pannonia under Junius Blaesus. These troops were composed of a few veterans, and a large number of the unruly element of the great city, gathered hastily together and enrolled in the alarm caused by the previous outbreak of revolt in that part. The complaints of the soldiers were not unreasonable, but the manner in which their demands were made was disorderly in the last degree. Blaesus in vain endeavoured to pacify them by sending his son to Rome as bearer of their demands; the mutineers drove away their tribunes and the praefects of the camp, plundered their effects, and killed some of the centurions. The tidings of this mutiny greatly disturbed Tiberius, and he resolved to send into Pannonia his son Drusus, together with two cohorts of the imperial guard, and a body of his German mounted soldiery under Aelius Sejanus, commander of his body-guard, who was to act as adviser. Particular instructions how to act were not given to Drusus: 'he was to be guided by circumstances.' But Tiberius impressed on him that nothing was to be yielded to alarm; no concessions made to mutineers with arms in their hands.

When the young prince arrived, and the rioters found that he had not come bringing with him full concessions to their demands, they were furious, and for a while Drusus and his advisers were in danger of their lives. But the energetic prince proved a true son of his father. He faced the mutineers boldly. An eclipse of the moon (27 Sept.) having caused a sudden panic among them, he seized the occasion to quell the insubordination, seize, try, and execute the ringleaders.

In obedience to the commands of Tiberius he restored discipline and order in the legions without having made the smallest concession, and he then referred their complaints to the senate.

Of Drusus the younger several busts remain; his resemblance to his father is marked, but he has not the breadth of brow; on the other hand, he has marks of a firmer character. The nose is much more prominent in him than in his father. The earliest representation of him is at Schloss Erbach. It belonged formerly to Pope Sextus v. It

is generally regarded as the portrait of Germanicus, but I think incorrectly. The resemblance to Tiberius in the full face is very marked.<sup>1</sup>

Hardly had Tiberius time to congratulate himself and his son on the suppression of the mutiny in Pannonia, than tidings reached him of a much more serious commotion among the legions under Germanicus, on the Lower Rhine, stationed near the present town of Bonn. These legions were likewise composed of recruits raised in the capital and despatched to the frontier. The mutinous legions, four in number, had

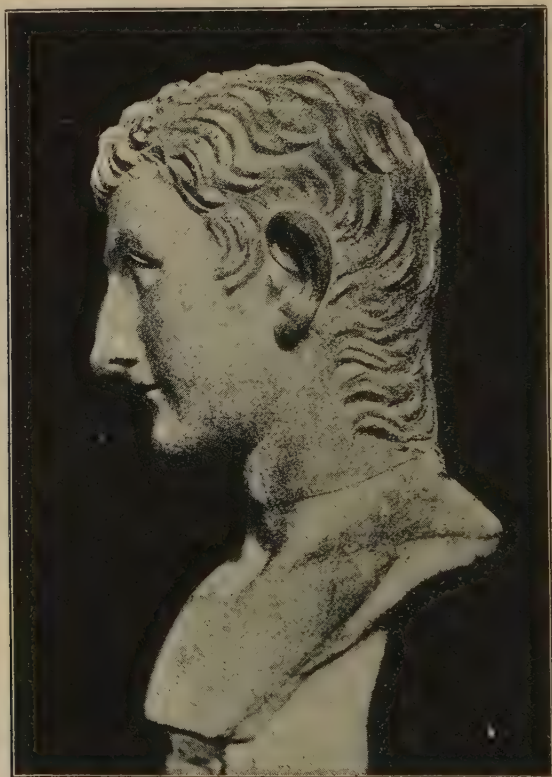


FIG. 63.—DRUSUS MINOR. Bust in Schloss Erbach.

resolved to induce their commander, Germanicus, to set himself at their head and march to Rome to dispute the throne with Tiberius. But they were deceived in their expectations of a ready consent from him. In spite of all their representations, Germanicus remained loyal to his father by adoption, and rejected their overtures with indignation. Then came out the real cause of discontent. The soldiers were weary of being

<sup>1</sup> Observe the hair worn down the nape of the neck, a peculiarity of Tiberius and his family.

posted on the confines of the empire. There were old fellows there who had been planted on farms long ago, and suddenly called to arms after they had accustomed their hands to the plough. They clustered about Germanicus, caught hold of his hand as if to kiss it, and thrust his fingers into their mouths to feel their toothless gums; others exposed their limbs, crippled with rheumatism, and their shanks shrivelled with old age.

Germanicus marshalled the soldiers in companies and addressed them. He began with high commendations of Tiberius, and recalled to the veterans his great services in Germany. Then he declared that tranquillity prevailed everywhere, and forthwith proceeded to deal mildly with the present disturbance. At once the mutineers broke out in angry clamour; they bared their sides, and exhibited not only the wounds received in battle, but the scars made by the lashes that had been dealt them in camp for slight offences. The levies from the city of Rome complained of incessant fatigue; the veterans asked where was the money they had heard had been bequeathed to them by Augustus. Then they insisted on Germanicus leading them to Rome, and promised their support if he would claim the succession.

The conduct of Germanicus in subduing this explosion of discontent contrasts unfavourably with that of his kinsman Drusus. Instead of maintaining a dignified carriage, he played a little pathetic scene before the soldiers in hopes of moving them to tears. 'Rather will I die than forget my duty!' he exclaimed, and, drawing his sword, declared he would plunge it in his heart unless they returned to their obedience. Some standing by threw themselves into his arms, to prevent the execution of his design, but others called out to him to despatch himself with all speed, and one soldier contemptuously extended to him his sword, saying: 'Take this, you will find it sharper than your own.' His friends saw that he was making himself ridiculous, and hurried him away to his tent. A council of war was held. The situation was critical. An understanding had been arrived at between the four legions on the Lower Rhine with the four legions on the Upper Rhine, to unite, sack the capital of the Ubii, the present Cologne, enter Gaul and plunder there, till their demands for higher pay and lighter labours were complied with. The result of the council was that a plan of allaying the mutiny was devised, and agreed to by Germanicus, still more discreditable than his former attempt. A forged letter as from Tiberius was drawn up, in which all the demands of the mutineers were granted—precisely what Tiberius would never have consented to—and this was read out to the legion. The soldiers were suspicious, and demanded the immediate execution of the promises. The veterans at once received the discharge they had asked for, but there was not cash in the army-chest for the increased pay. Germanicus promised the money as soon as the winter quarters were occupied. The mutineers were urgent and

threatening. He was forced to expend all his own savings and to borrow of his officers to meet the demands of the soldiery. Thereupon two of the legions marched off with their money-bags slung to the standards and eagles. We can well understand that it was, as Tacitus tells us, 'a disgraceful spectacle.'

Then Germanicus went to the quarters of the four legions on the Upper Rhine, to confirm them in their allegiance and duty. Three of the legions readily obeyed, and the other 'demurring somewhat,



FIG. 64.—GERMANICUS. Bust of the Statue in the Louvre, from Gabii.

Germanicus induced the soldiers to obey, by offers of money and a discharge, for which they had not even asked.'

In striking contrast to his conduct was not only that of young Drusus, but that of his own underling, M'. Ennius, praefect of the camp in a garrison among the Chauci, the most outlying fort in the Teutoburger Wald. The garrison showed signs of mutiny, whereupon Ennius at once ordered out for execution two of the ringleaders. This, however, did not overawe the soldiers; they rose in a mass, drove



away their officers, and marched towards the Rhine to unite with the mutinous legions there. But Ennius snatched the colours from the ensign-bearer, faced the soldiers, and threatened with instant death any man who dared to fall out of the ranks when he led them; and the mutineers, cowed by his dauntless conduct, suffered him to reconduct them to their camp.

On the return of Germanicus to the capital of the Ubii (Cologne) disturbances broke out afresh. A messenger had arrived from Tiberius, and the soldiers discovered, what they had suspected, that the letter presented to them as from the emperor was a forgery. Their indignation knew no bounds. 'In the dead of the night they began to clamour for the legionary standard at the quarters of Germanicus, and rushing tumultuously to his gate burst in the doors, dragged the prince from his bed, and with menaces of death compelled him to surrender the standard to them.' Then they roamed about the streets, and meeting with the imperial messenger, fell on him and would have murdered him but for the intervention of a standard-bearer.

'At length,' says Tacitus, 'on the return of day Germanicus entered the camp and addressed the soldiers, imputing the furious outbreak to a fatality, and affirming that it had been kindled by the gods, and not by the soldiers.' One is not surprised to hear from Tacitus that Germanicus was censured for his conduct even by his friends and partisans.

With difficulty he sent off the imperial messenger under the protection of an escort of German cavalry. But when he attempted to do the same with his wife Agrippina and his son Caius, then three years old, the soldiers again rose in opposition—and not the soldiers only: his wife as well. She bitterly exclaimed that 'she was the granddaughter of the deified Augustus, and was not so degenerate as to give way before danger,' a taunt Germanicus must have felt as double-edged; it showed him how she valued her Julian blood above that of the Claudians, and it allowed him to see how she estimated his recent dealings with his mutinous soldiery.

However, Germanicus began to cry, and the sight of his tears at length induced her to depart. She was expecting her confinement shortly; but the young Caius—'Little Boots,' the soldiers called him—the regimental pet, was not suffered to leave. The legionaries did not understand the reason of the departure of Agrippina, and Germanicus was obliged to enter into particulars as to her condition to satisfy them. But his real reason for dismissing her was that he had planned a monstrous method of chastisement to be dealt out to the mutineers. No sooner was his wife safe at Trèves than he communicated to his officers the scheme he had devised. The conduct of the legionaries had been infamous, and the whole weight of the anger of Tiberius was sure to fall on them as soon as he heard of their outbreak and of the manner in which his messenger had been insulted and ill-treated. The only way

in which the soldiery could recover his favour was for them to take the law into their own hands and execute all those among them who had been guilty.

Thereupon the soldiers set to work to constitute a court, appoint their own judge, and execute those whom they deemed deserving of death. 'No longer the same men,' says Tacitus, 'they run in every direction and draw the ringleaders of the mutiny in chains before Caius Caetronius, legate of the first legion, and he exercised judgment and sentenced in this fashion:—The legionaries stood round with swords drawn, and the accused was exhibited to them by a tribune on a scaffold; if they shouted out that he was guilty, then he flung him over to them headlong to be butchered. And the soldiers rejoiced in these slaughters, as though by committing them they absolved themselves. Nor did Germanicus interfere, leaving them to bear the blame of the cruelty, as not having been caused through any order of his.'

Having in this monstrous manner composed the mutiny at Cologne among the soldiers of the first and twentieth legions, Germanicus hastened to the Old Camp, now Xanten, where were quartered the fifth and twenty-first legions, and proceeded to bring them into order by the same method. He had sent letters beforehand to prepare the way, declaring his intention to take summary vengeance on the mutineers, *unless they forestalled him*. These letters were privately read to the standard-bearers, the inferior officers, and such of the privates as were least disaffected; and Aulus Caecina, who was in command, exhorted his hearers 'to secure their own safety, and themselves wipe off the disgrace that affected the two legions. In peace,' he significantly added, 'we have to go into the question of motives and degrees of fault, but in times of war innocent and guilty must fall together.' The hint was not lost; it was whispered from one to another, and produced the required result. 'At the suggestion of the general a time was fixed for putting to the sword all the most depraved and turbulent: then, on a signal given among themselves, they rushed into the tents and butchered them, while in utter ignorance of the plot; none but those who were privy to it understanding wherefore the massacre began, or where it would end. This had a different character from all civic slaughters that had ever happened. It was not a battle, it was not between men from hostile camps, but from the same tents; men who ate at the same boards by day and slept in the same apartments by night, divided into parties, hurled darts at their comrades. Wounds, outcries, blood—all were aware of, but the reason none knew. Some of the well-affected were slain, and then the most guilty, finding who were the objects of carnage, themselves flew to arms. Neither general nor tribune was present to control the proceeding; full licence was given to the soldiers to satiate themselves with blood.'<sup>1</sup>

Tacitus, *Annal.* i. 48, 49.

Then, in order to restore discipline, Germanicus suddenly crossed the Rhine at the head of the legions and made an unprovoked attack on the Germans in what is now Westphalia, where the unsuspecting and unarmed natives were fallen upon and put to the edge of the sword. On his way back Germanicus met with considerable reverses from the infuriated tribes roused by his dastardly attack. He however regained the left bank of the Rhine and settled into winter quarters.

The conduct of Germanicus in this mutiny must have greatly annoyed Tiberius. Tacitus puts his own colour on it; he says, 'Tiberius was glad that the mutiny was suppressed, but it was torture to him that Germanicus, by largesses and discharges, had gained the affections of the army, as well as acquired military renown. However, he consulted the senate and bestowed copious praises upon the valour of Germanicus, but in terms too pompous and strained for it to be believed that he spoke from the depth of his heart. With more brevity he commended the conduct of Drusus, but with a tone of greater earnestness and sincerity.'

That we can well believe. Drusus had behaved admirably; Germanicus deserved to be court-martialled and put to death. A more despicable and discreditable proceeding is not to be found in all military records. Jealousy of Germanicus Tiberius could not feel; he could not have desired his worst enemy to have conducted himself with such want of decency and barbarity. How could any soldiers respect Germanicus after the matter of the forged letters, or trust him after the licensed butchery in their camp?

But Tiberius behaved with wonderful forbearance. Germanicus was his nephew and adopted son, and he would not publicly disgrace him as he deserved; he ratified all the concessions granted to the mutineers, and confirmed him in his government, that he might be given an opportunity of recovering his lost laurels. He owed him a debt of gratitude, moreover, for having so emphatically refused to head a revolt, and for having made all the German legions take the oath to him; and lastly, Germanicus was the son of his brother whom he had tenderly loved.

A curiously characteristic circumstance is recorded by Tacitus relative to the conduct of Tiberius, when the news of the disturbances among the legions on the Rhine reached Rome. In the capital there was wild excitement. It was thought that with the break-up of military discipline on the German frontier there would follow inroads by the barbarians. The population of Rome, easily alarmed, and when alarmed clamorous, surrounded the palace of Tiberius with cries that he should at once go to the Rhine and quell the mutiny. The people, insolent in their terror, taunted him with the energy shown by Augustus. 'Could Augustus,' they said, 'in his old age take so many journeys into Germany? Then why should Tiberius, in the vigour of his age, sit in the senate, getting opinions out of the senators?' Tiberius, however,

did not go ; but he made as though he were about to depart, choosing his attendants, and ordering a fleet to be ready. Tacitus thinks this was dissimulation, that he never meant to go. This we may doubt. One of his fits of indecision was on him. He was unable to make up his mind what to do. It was injudicious at that time to leave Rome, and he waited for further tidings from the frontier.

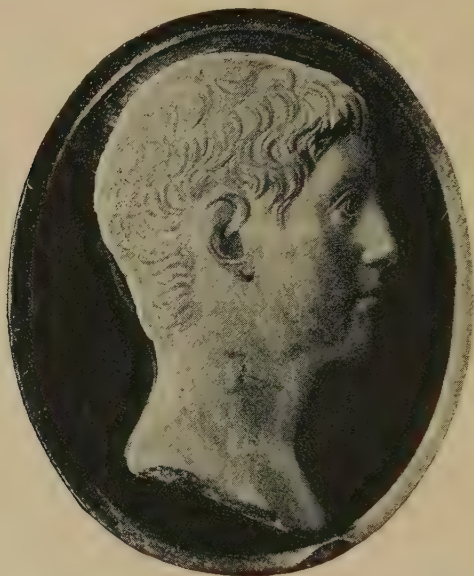


FIG. 65.—GERMANICUS. Sardonyx in the British Museum, enlarged.

Germanicus was desirous of retrieving his credit with his uncle and with the army. The senate had, indeed, decreed him a triumph for his raid into Germany, but it was given with the condition that  
A.U.C. 768. he was to receive the honour on his return to Rome at the  
A.D. 15. end of his governorship. He could not, however, hide from  
Aet. 56. himself that his proceedings had met with adverse comment, and were widely disapproved. He resolved accordingly on a grand campaign, the achievements of which should efface the recollection of the indignities of the suppressed mutiny. He divided his host into two parts : one, under his deputy Caecina, was to enter the country of the Cherusci from the Lower Rhine ; with the other he proposed to invade the territories of the Chatti (Hesse), and the two armies were to meet in the Teutoburger Forest in the neighbourhood of the scene of the defeat of Varus. This was a copy of the strategy his uncle had practised in his attack on the Marcomanni, but he had not his uncle's ability to make it successful.

The discord and jealousies of the German chiefs assisted him. Segestes, an old chief of the Cherusci, who had favoured the



Romans, had fallen out with his son-in-law, the gallant Arminius; and he offered, if the Romans would assist him, that he would deliver to them the spoils of the Varian disaster, and that he would betray into their hands some of the noble Germans who were attached to the cause of national freedom, and would deliver up his own daughter, Thusnelda, the wife of Arminius, a woman of high spirit, more devoted to the cause of her husband and her people than to that of her father and his Roman abettors. The treacherous old chieftain handed over these victims to Germanicus, who at once despatched them to Ravenna, to serve as adornments of his triumph. But this base act of treachery roused the indignation of all the German race, and alienated from Segestes his former allies. Germanicus, to his dismay, saw the movement spread on all sides. He perceived that the whole of Northern Germany must be thoroughly subdued with the sword, or be frankly abandoned. Augustus and Tiberius had alike cherished hopes that Roman civilisation, gradually advancing into the forests of Lower Germany, would soften the savagery of the natives, and make them submit more kindly to the Roman sway. But the insult and injury now offered had exasperated the German chiefs beyond hope of reconciliation. The whole of the country from the Rhine to the Elbe was in a ferment. The ill-judged and unscrupulous conduct of the young Caesar had brought affairs on the frontier to a crisis. All the tribes were now combined under the enraged Arminius. Germanicus divided his army into three bodies, which were to cross the Rhine and enter the territories of the enemy from three different quarters. He himself ascended the Ems, and soon found himself on the scene of the slaughter of Varus, which had taken place six years before. The soldiers collected the bones of their slain countrymen, and erected over them a funereal tumulus, of which Caesar himself placed the first sod.

The enemy retreated before the Romans till they had drawn them into an ambush, with the result that it was with the utmost difficulty, and only by desperate courage, that the entrapped army escaped the fate of Varus and his legions. Germanicus was forced to beat a rapid retreat to the Ems, at the mouth of which he had left his fleet. He owed his escape from complete destruction to the fact that Arminius, instead of pursuing and annihilating him, turned to encounter Caecina, who was advancing into the land of the Cherusci over the vast peat morass of the Bourtanger Moor, where to the present day, four feet below the surface, lies the ancient Roman causeway of oak piles and planks. Arminius came upon Caecina and his detachment in the midst of this immense bog, on the causeway. The fight lasted for days; the Romans retreated, contesting every foot of ground with their lighter harnessed enemies, who could trip over the treacherous surface and assail them penned in on the wooden bridge. After terrible losses, Caecina man-

aged to withdraw upon firm ground on the Batavian side of the swamp, and with thinned ranks to march back to the Rhine.

Meanwhile those flying from the retreating force of Caecina had brought panic among those who held the camps at Xanten on the Gallic side of the Rhine. Rumour magnified the disaster that had fallen on Caecina. Those left in charge of the bridge, in their terror, spoke of destroying it lest the triumphant Germans, passing across after the flying Romans, should seize on the camp and put to the edge of the sword all therein.

The resolution of one woman saved the legions under Caecina from extermination, and the honour of Rome from stain. Agrippina with all her energy opposed the frantic expedient. Planting herself at the head of the bridge, from which she refused to move, she received the retreating legions, encouraged them with praise of their valour, took charge of the sick, distributed to them medicines, gave bandages for the wounded, and revived the confidence of all by her resolute demeanour. The return of Germanicus was even more disastrous. He had descended the Ems on board his vessels; but when he put forth to sea, among the shallows of the Frisian coast, he found it necessary to lighten them. For this purpose he disembarked two legions, and bade them march along the coast till they reached the mouth of the Rhine. But on that low alluvial shore the tides flow with rapidity, where not banked out, and cover vast tracts.

An equinoctial tide set in, and great numbers of the men, together with their baggage, were swept away and lost. 'The lands were completely inundated—sea, shore, fields had one uniform face; no distinction of depths from shallows, of firm from treacherous footing; the men were prostrated by the great waves, and sucked outwards by the eddies. Beasts of burden, baggage, and dead bodies floated among the living. The several companies got mixed at random, now wading breast-high, now submerged to the chin; sometimes sinking when they stepped on treacherous ground, and never rising to the surface again. Cries and mutual encouragements availed nothing. The water roared about them as it engulfed them. Coward and brave, wise and foolish, prudent and careless, all were involved in one rushing flood.'

The first great campaign of Germanicus had ended in disaster. The first small successes when he entered and devastated the land of the Chatti—some turf huts burnt, the recovery of two of the eagles lost by Varus, and the unworthy capture of the wife of Arminius—that was all Germanicus could boast of having effected in the year, and the glaring colours with which Tacitus paints in his canvas fail to hide the truth that this great undertaking had ended in failure. The losses were so great that Gaul, Spain, and even Italy were called upon to fill the gaps in the reduced legions. It was, in one word, a defeat—*clades* is the term used by Tacitus,—and not all the efforts made by Germanicus to dis-

guise the fact could blind Tiberius to the magnitude of the disaster, and to the military incapacity of his nephew. Still, Tiberius trusted that another year might prove more favourable. Germanicus might have acquired discretion, though it was vain to expect in him genius. With the greatest reluctance the prince suffered him to undertake a third expedition. This very reluctance, which was justified, was, however, misinterpreted at Rome,—it was said to have been bred of jealousy at the favour in which Germanicus was regarded, and of envy at his glorious achievements.

A.U.C. 769.  
A.D. 16.  
Act. 57.

On this third occasion Germanicus, probably having had it strongly impressed on him by Tiberius, resolved to use the utmost precaution against disaster. He abandoned the thought of penetrating to the heart of the Cheruscan territory by land. He had devastated the country he had traversed in the preceding raids with fire and sword. Not a single road had he constructed, and the transport of food and tents through forest and over bog was laborious; moreover, he was without a sufficiency of beasts of burden. He therefore undertook to attack the Cherusci from the sea. A fleet of a thousand transports was collected, and his army was embarked thereon, and passed down the canal of Drusus into the Zuydersee, and thence to the mouth of the Ems. There at once Germanicus, with characteristic imbecility, committed two initial blunders. In the first place, he did not bring his vessels up the river, as he might very well have done, but unloaded them at the estuary; and in the second place, he disembarked his soldiers on the left instead of on the right bank of the river, so that all the unnecessary labour of bridging the stream higher up was imposed on it. The consequence was that he was delayed many days by difficulties presented by the marshy nature of the soil. In wading and dragging the baggage through the bogs many men were lost, and all were worn out. In order to cover his rear, Germanicus had secured a position named Aliso, between Hamm and Wesel, and had fortified it.

Hardly had he plunged into the morasses of the Ems than tidings reached him that the Germans of the neighbourhood of Aliso had risen and were threatening his base. He was obliged to send back his officer Stertinius with a large body of horse, to sweep the country round Aliso, on both sides of the Lippe, and ‘chastise the people with fire and sword.’

The very first encounter of Germanicus with the enemy resulted in the defeat of the Romans. In order to protect the men engaged in the construction of the bridge over the river Weser, he had separated his cavalry into three detachments, and sent them across at three separate fords. One of these, drawn in pursuit of some Cherusci who simulated flight, were led into an ambush and almost exterminated. The battle itself took place on the Ida’s or Virgin’s meadow, near the Porta Westphalica, between Rinteln and Hansberg, and ended in the defeat of the



FIG. 66.—GERMANICUS. Statue found at Veii ; in the Lateran Museum.



Germans, and a slaughter that lasted, Tacitus tells us, from early morning till evening, strewing the plain with corpses. Thereupon Germanicus erected a trophy. Tacitus then informs us that the Germans, irritated at the erection of this trophy, and, apparently in no way crushed by the tremendous defeat described, again assailed Germanicus, and were again defeated with enormous slaughter. Whereupon Germanicus erected a second trophy, but thought it advisable to withdraw. He had indeed drenched the soil with the blood of the brave Cherusci, but they would not stoop to acknowledge defeat, and solicit the favour of Rome. One only of the tribes submitted. The Angrivarii, menaced in their homes by the fortress at Aliso, sought peace. It is therefore probable that the battles were by no means so decisive as the Roman historian represents. We are shown, as in the fable, the man standing over the prostrate lion. Germanicus now withdrew from the Cheruscan territory to the Ems, and reshipped his legions on the transports. But ill-luck attends on incompetence, the vessels were assailed by severe gales from the south-west, laden with rain. 'The ships were scattered and driven into the open ocean, or upon islands dangerous from rocks or sandbanks. Having cleared these, the tide turned, and flowing with the wind, no anchors would hold, there was no baling out the water that burst over the vessels. Hence, beasts of burden, baggage, even arms, were thrown overboard to lighten the ships, which took in water at their sides, and from the billows breaking over them. . . . Part of the fleet was sunk, some ships drifted to remote islands, uninhabited, where the men perished through famine, or fed on the carcasses of the horses dashed up on the same shore. The galley of Germanicus alone reached the coast of the Chauca, where, during the day and night, he wandered about the cliffs, reproaching himself as being the author of such an overwhelming destruction, and was hardly restrained by his friends from suicide. At length, with the flowing tide and a favouring gale, the shattered ships returned, almost all without oars, and with garments spread out to serve as sails, and some utterly disabled towed by those less crippled.'

These disasters sufficed to rouse the Germans again to take arms, so little dispirited do they appear to have been by the defeats recorded above. Germanicus, however, promptly made an incursion into the lands of the Marsi and Chatti, and recovered one more—the last—of the eagles lost in the defeat of Varus. Once again the legions were conducted back to winter quarters, and Germanicus requested Tiberius to suffer him to make a fourth and final effort to subdue the Germans.

But the emperor was too wise to permit any further waste of life and risk of disgrace in that quarter, too many gold hooks had been thrown away in catching minnows, and Germanicus was recalled to Rome to enjoy his triumphs for dubious victories, and to receive a commission in the East.

There is a difficulty in fixing the portrait busts and statues of Germanicus, owing to the strong family likeness running through the Claudii, but there are some that can be pretty certainly identified. There is one, a statue found at Gabii, now in the Louvre (Fig. 64); the beautiful statue in the Lateran from Veii (Fig. 66); and an admirable sardonyx (Fig. 65) from the Carlisle collection of gems, now in the British Museum, a recent acquisition.

In all these, the face is pleasant, but certainly lacking in ability. The brow is deficient in breadth and height, and the top of his head is low. The mouth and chin, and the form of head of the Veii statue are the same as are found in Nero, indeed the likeness of the grandson, a coarse, fat likeness, is hardly to be mistaken. The chin of Germanicus is, however, not rounded, but flat. The mouth is certainly feeble. In the Lateran is a statue in armour, from Cervetri, sometime supposed to be Germanicus, but the character of the face is that of a man intellectually superior; it is that of the elder Drusus.

#### IV.—THE DEATH OF GERMANICUS.

WE must go back a little, before following Germanicus into Syria.

The wretched Julia, after having languished for five years on the barren island of Pandateria, attended by her mother only, had been removed by order of Augustus to Rhegium in Calabria, and the restraint to which she had been subjected was somewhat relaxed. There she spent nine years, and they were years of trouble. She saw one hope after another extinguished. Her two eldest sons had died whilst she was in Pandateria, and from that quarter, therefore, all chance of release was gone. The look-out became more gloomy. Her only remaining son, Agrippa, was also an exile, in the islet of Planasia. Her eldest daughter, bearing her name, soon shared her disgrace. It would seem as though a curse rested on all the fruit of her womb.

The younger Julia remained in banishment for twenty years, till her death. The aged Livia assisted her with means to lighten the rigour of her imprisonment, and used her exertions to obtain for her milder treatment.

The last hope of the elder Julia that a pardon would be granted at the death of Augustus was not fulfilled. The will of the emperor expressed no desire that she should be restored to liberty; on the contrary, it pronounced the absolute disinheritation of Julia and her daughter of like name and character and conduct. It even forbade that their ashes should dishonour the family mausoleum. Moreover, almost immediately on the news reaching Julia of her father's death, followed the tidings of the murder of her last son.

When her final hope went out, the spirit of Julia gave way, and she sank into her grave a few months after her father's death.

Tacitus says that Tiberius 'caused her to pine away gradually from want, calculating that from the duration of her exile her murder would not be noticed.' Suetonius says: 'Instead of performing any kind of office or showing humanity to his wife when she was banished and confined to one town by her father's order, he forbade her to stir out of the house, or converse with any men. He even wronged her of the dowry given her by her father, and of her yearly allowance, by a legal quibble, because Augustus had made no provision concerning these in his will.'

The truth would seem to be that there was entertained suspicion, not without reason, of a plot for her release, associated with the setting up of Agrippa Postumus, which was frustrated by the death of the unfortunate youth, but which recovered life with the attempt



FIG. 67.—AGRIPPINA. Bronze Medal, enlarged.<sup>1</sup>

of the freed-man, Clemens; and under these circumstances it was necessary that a stricter watch should be kept on the proceedings of Julia. That Tiberius had her starved to death is most improbable, but that the enemies of Tiberius charged him with her murder is certain, —on what grounds except that animosity like charity believeth all things, but unlike charity thinketh all kinds of evil, it is impossible to say.

The circumstances which necessitated the mission of Germanicus to the East were of a varied and delicate nature, and were such as could only be arranged by a prince of the imperial house. The decease of Archelaus, the king of Cappadocia, who had recently died at Rome, offered an opportunity for annexing that country to the empire. At the

<sup>1</sup> The light falling on the nostril gives to the above a somewhat false appearance, as though the nose were snub.

same time, the people of the petty kingdom of Commagene were said to be desirous of annexation; those of the still autonomous districts of Cilicia, on the extinction of the royal house, expressed a desire to be subjected to the direct dominion of Rome. Troubles had again broken out in Parthia and Armenia; and the provincials of Syria and Judoea were murmuring at the weight of the imperial burdens, and entreating for practical relief.

Drusus was too young to be intrusted with so many matters of importance, demanding experience as well as judgment, and although Germanicus had exhibited neither intelligence nor judgment in the conduct of the German war, Tiberius was obliged to intrust the settlement of affairs in the East to him, because he had no other, a member of the imperial family, who was available. Knowing his incapacity, Tiberius did not consider it prudent to allow these multifarious matters to be arranged by Germanicus unassisted by a man of riper years and tried common sense, and he commissioned one Cn. Calpurnius Piso to proceed to Syria, and there keep an eye on the proceedings of Germanicus and assist him with his advice.

Nothing could have been more unfortunate for all parties concerned. The position of Tiberius was a most difficult one. The interests of the empire in the East were at stake. If Germanicus was to stir up war and squander his resources, sacrificing men and stores in the East, as he had done in Germany, the cost to the treasury, the drain of men, might be intolerable. Tiberius could not disgrace the nephew to whom he had allowed a splendid triumph which he did not deserve; he was obliged to remove him from the scene of his muddling and mischief on the Rhine; and the expedient of sending an underling to be with him as adviser, as Augustus had sent Lollius, and then Quirinius, to be with the young prince Caius, commended itself to his judgment. But he made a fatal mistake in the choice of the man for this purpose.

Germanicus was a favourite with the Roman people. They admired his graceful ease and kindly courtesy. They especially delighted in seeing him surrounded with a large and flourishing family. They were satisfied with the official bulletins which glossed over the reverses to his arms, and magnified the petty successes; they heard of the largesses he had distributed among the soldiers, and hoped some of the golden shower might descend on them also. He had none of the reserve and stiffness of manner that marked Tiberius, he was frank and affable, with the frankness and affability of the late emperor Augustus. He was a man of culture, his compositions in Greek and Latin verse were admired; nor did he neglect the practice of oratory, employing it in defence of the wronged and oppressed. Finally, the populace had been dazzled by the splendid triumph he had enjoyed, when captives of the Cherusci and Chatti and Angrivarii were led in chains after his chariot, re-



representatives of the tribes he had fought against, and, as was pretended, had subdued.

A large party in Rome made him their political idol. They asserted, and perhaps believed, that, like his father Drusus, he was inclined to restore to the oligarchy the liberty to do wrong; and those who did, and those who did not believe this, but disliked Tiberius, combined to extol the virtues and graces of the young emperor, and contrast them with the imagined vices and obvious uncouthness of the reigning prince.

The senate invested Germanicus with an extraordinary command, with unlimited power over all the Roman provinces in the East beyond the Hellespont. All the governors and military commanders there were placed under his authority. No other man save Agrippa, and he once only, had been given such power. Germanicus started on his mission in the autumn after his triumph. Agrippina accompanied him as usual, although she was again pregnant.

They sailed from Ancona; and on reaching Dalmatia, Germanicus had an interview with his brother-by-adoption, the young and promising Drusus. Thence in stormy weather he sailed down the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, and after a rough voyage reached Nicopolis in Achaia, on the first day of the new year. There he remained a few days, and whilst his somewhat battered fleet was being repaired, he made an excursion to the scene of the battle of Actium, and inspected the monument erected in commemoration of the victory, and the lines of Antony's intrenchments that were still visible. It was not possible for him to contemplate this scene without emotion, 'for Augustus was his maternal uncle, and Antony his grandfather. Therefore,' says Tacitus, 'to him it afforded a prolific source of images pleasing and saddening.'

Thence he went to Athens, which he entered with a single lictor, in compliment to the ancient city and ally. Then sailing to Euboea, he crossed over to Lesbos, where Agrippina gave birth to Julia, the last of her children.

The whole journey was taken with a certain majestic slowness, that ill satisfied Tiberius, who wished Germanicus to go at once to the place of his duties. But the young prince was of a romantic turn of mind, and desired to use the opportunity for visiting on his way whatever was famed in history. He sought the Thracian cities of Perinthus and Byzantium, sailed through the Propontis into the Euxine, 'from a desire to become acquainted with places of antiquity and renown.' On his return he thought of viewing the sacred rites of Samothrace, held in honour of the Cabeiri, but contrary winds prevented his landing. He explored the ruins of Ilium, and went to Colophon, and there inquired of the oracle as to his future. It was said afterwards that the answer given was unfavourable, and pointed to an early death. Then he returned to Lesbos, where he took up Agrippina and sailed with her

to Rhodes. There began the first act of the tragedy to which the mission of Germanicus shaped itself.

Tiberius had recalled from Syria the governor, Creticus Silanus ; it was insinuated afterwards, because the daughter of Silanus was betrothed—betrothed only—to Nero, the eldest of the children of Germanicus, and the governor therefore might be supposed to support and favour the father of the man who was to be his son-in-law. But the real reason undoubtedly was to clear the Syrian stage before Germanicus arrived there, that he might act with complete independence, unhampered by the presence of the former governor, who had lost the confidence of the provincials. Moreover, Tiberius desired to place there a man of proved experience, and of mature age, who would report immediately and truthfully to him on the condition of affairs, and on the methods adopted by Germanicus, whom he could not implicitly trust.

Tiberius knew by bitter experience what was the worth of the bulletins sent home from Germany, and he was resolved, considering what issues were at stake in the East, to have his own agent there, directly responsible to himself, and in direct communication with him, that he might be able to interfere promptly and effectively in the event of Germanicus acting in a blundering and unstatesmanlike manner.

Cnaeus Calpurnius Piso, whom Tiberius had selected for this purpose, was the son of a sturdy old republican, of the bluest blood of the plebian aristocracy. The father had been a mortal enemy of Julius Caesar and his policy, and had fought with Brutus and Cassius against Octavian and Antony. He had received his pardon, but in proud and angry isolation he had refrained from taking any office till Augustus himself entreated him to accept the consulship. In pride, impracticability, and doggedness, the son was like his father. Moreover, he was married to Plancina, the bosom friend of Livia. He was, Seneca tells us, not a bad man, but crabbed and hard. In fact, he was exactly the opposite to the amiable, yielding, and cheerful young prince, whom he was sent to keep in check.

Whilst Germanicus was sauntering along, Calpurnius Piso left Rome, also taking his wife with him, came to Athens, where he behaved roughly to the people, indirectly finding fault with the manner in which Germanicus had conducted himself there, and sailed directly for Syria. He caught up Germanicus near the island of Rhodes. The weather was stormy, and his vessels would have been dashed to pieces against the cliffs, had not Germanicus sent a couple of galleys to his aid, which took him in tow and rescued him from his peril. Piso paid Germanicus a visit of compliment in return for this favour, and thanked him in a gruff and ungracious tone, that boded no good. He remained but a single day in harbour at Rhodes, and then left for his province, with precipitation. Germanicus followed at his leisure.

Piso had been sent as proconsul to Syria, but by the terms of his com-

mission he was to be an assistant (*adjutor*) to Germanicus. He had also received secret instructions from Tiberius; about that there can be no doubt, nor, one would suppose, as to their nature. But Piso from the first looked on his commission and his position from a very different point of view from that intended by the emperor, and at once set to work to ingratiate himself with the soldiers and to settle himself firmly into his proconsular seat. The means employed by him we learn from his enemies. They were reprehensible enough, if true. But that was not all; his wife let fall slighting remarks relative to Agrippina and Germanicus, and circulated a report that Piso alone was in the confidence of the emperor, and that he was placed where he was to act as a check on Germanicus; which was true, but should not have been said.

Finding that Piso was industriously sowing mischief, the young prince thought it was time for him to quicken his movements, and he hastened at once into Armenia, where he succeeded in judiciously settling a contest of rivals for the throne. Then he visited Cappadocia and took measures for its organisation into a Roman province. He also subjected the kingdom of Commagene to the administration of a Roman praetor.

In the meantime in Syria 'Piso courted the common soldiers by bounties and caresses, removed the older centurions and tribunes who exerted strict discipline, and filled their places with creatures of his own; he permitted sloth in the camp, licentiousness in the towns, suffered the soldiery to rove over the country and commit excesses everywhere, and carried corruption to such lengths, that at last the privates came to call him the Father of the Legions.'

This is all very improbable. Such conduct would be displeasing to Tiberius, nor would it serve himself. A soldiery of relaxed discipline are of no advantage to any one. Moreover, Piso was an old soldier of a peculiarly harsh and cold nature, and conduct of this nature would be contrary to his disposition and principles. Had things been as bad as they are represented by Tacitus, it would have been the duty of Germanicus at once and effectually to stop this demoralisation of the troops. As far as we know, he did nothing of the sort. He did, however, order Piso to send him a contingent into Armenia, and Piso neglected to do so, or did so when too late to be of service.

It is possible enough that the two men would have come to an understanding had it not been for the presence of their wives. As Tacitus intimates, all the tittle-tattle relative to the secret instructions given to Piso, that set him practically above Germanicus, came from Plancina. A meeting was appointed between Germanicus and Piso in Cyrrus, near Antioch. 'Here they met; Piso with a countenance under constraint, so as not to indicate fear, and Germanicus keeping his under control to conceal his displeasure. The latter was, indeed, of an

amiable disposition, but friends, eager to inflame animosities, had aggravated real offences, added others that were fictitious, and brought the most varied charges against Piso, Plancina, and their sons. To this interview Germanicus admitted but few intimates. He began his complaints in words of glossed resentment. Piso answered with ironical apologies, and they separated in open enmity. Piso after that rarely sat in the tribunal by the side of Germanicus; and when he did he showed tokens of the most determined opposition.'

On one evening when at a banquet given by the king of the Nabathaeans, gold crowns were presented to Germanicus and Agrippina, and one markedly lighter to Piso, who threw away his crown upon the floor, and said: 'This is a feast, not to a Parthian monarch, but to the son of a Roman prince,'—an act of rudeness and ill-temper. Germanicus endured this with patience, but he seized his opportunity shortly after to affront both Piso and Plancina openly by ordering the banishment of a Parthian prince who had gained the favour of Piso, and had laden Plancina with presents.

When the relations between Germanicus and his subordinate were in this strained condition, with the result of producing disorder and rivalries in the province, it was obviously his duty to remain at his post and communicate with Tiberius, so as to obtain the recall of Piso. But instead of doing this he started on an antiquarian excursion into Egypt, leaving Piso to his own devices, to encourage disaffection among the troops, and mistrust among the provincials against the plenipotentiary. The professed object of Germanicus was an examination into the condition of Egypt; but, as Tacitus admits, this excuse was a cloak to his desire to see the antiquities of the country of the Nile. His behaviour in Egypt was studiously moderate and courteous; he went about unattended by soldiers, in the peaceful garb of a Greek philosopher. He ascended the river from Canopus, visited the pyramids and temples on its banks, and listened with awe and wonder to the mysterious music which 'breathed from the face' of Memnon. He consulted the oracle of the sacred bull Apis, and explored Elephantine and Syene, the farthest limits of the empire. On his return, to his vexation, he found awaiting him a gentle reprimand from his uncle. He had forgotten that he had been sent into the East for business, and not to amuse himself with sight-seeing. The sacred bull Apis had refused to eat out of his hand, and this had been regarded as ominous; the omen was fulfilled, he hoped, in this remonstrance from Tiberius. He at once returned to Syria, where he found that Piso had been taking full advantage of his absence to make many changes in the administration on his own authority. He had reversed the orders left by his superior, or had ignored them. Violent scenes of mutual recrimination ensued between the two men; and, as is the case with men of mild and easy-going natures, the roused Germanicus in the outburst of his resentment



passed the bounds of moderation and decency, and met with retorts, insolent and galling, because deserved, from the proud Calpurnian. Piso saw that his position was untenable, and with rage at his heart he left the headquarters of the prince and returned to Antioch, having thrown up his commission.

No sooner, however, had Piso reached Antioch than tidings arrived that his enemy was ill. He therefore resolved to await the result, and not start immediately for Rome. Further news arrived that Germanicus was recovering, whereupon the native population and resident Romans prepared a demonstration of rejoicing, which Piso promptly suppressed as premature. It is said that he sent his lictors to disperse the procession. Believing the tidings, he started from Antioch and reached Seleucia, there to take ship, when he heard of the relapse of Germanicus, and again delayed his departure.

Directly Germanicus fell ill—probably of fever occasioned by his hurried journey from Egypt, followed by the violent scene with Piso—the suspicion of Agrippina was aroused that his life had been attempted with poison. From suspicion she rushed to conviction, and by telling Germanicus what she thought, greatly increased the hold the sickness had over him, as Tacitus admits.<sup>1</sup> But not content with poison, Agrippina and her attendants tore up the floors, broke down the plaster, ransacked the attics of the house in which Germanicus lay, in quest of evidence that witchcraft had been employed against him. Scraps of human bodies, old mouldy bones, pieces of lead with the name of Germanicus inscribed on them, and all kinds of mysterious rubbish were sought and found by the slaves, and produced in triumphant evidence of ‘sorceries by which souls are thought to be doomed to the infernal gods.’

Piso, as in duty bound, sent messengers to condole with the sick man, and inquire into his condition. They were at once pounced on as spies. The brain of Germanicus, heated by fever and never strong, was driven frantic with terror.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Piso he renounced his friendship, and ordered him immediately to leave the province. Piso obeyed, though Germanicus exceeded his powers in giving this order. Piso went on board ship, but sailed slowly on his course, halting for news at every port.

The news of the departure of his antagonist seemed for a while to revive the sick prince. But this was a last flicker of the expiring vital flame. Before it died out, he summoned all his friends about him and made them solemnly swear that, as long as life lasted, they would not fail to pursue Piso and Plancina, and bring them to justice for the murder which he was fully persuaded they had committed on himself.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Saevam vim morbi augebat persuasio veneni a Pisone accepti.’—*Ann.* ii. 69.

<sup>2</sup> He was a nervous man at the best of times, and could not hear cock crow without a shiver of fear.

He was convinced that his imperial father, Tiberius, and his brother Drusus, would support them in their attempt so soon as they received the news of his miserable end, 'brought about by the dark devices of a woman.' This testimony of the dying man's confidence in Tiberius shows how far he was from supposing that the emperor was in any way guilty of his death, and had any share in the machinations of Piso and Plancina.

One anxiety now preyed on the mind of Germanicus, and that was relative to his wife Agrippina. He knew her ambitious and passionate character sufficiently to anticipate danger to herself and his children, unless she restrained her temper and modified her pretensions. He therefore turned to her after he had received the oath from his friends to avenge his death, and in their presence conjured Agrippina 'by her thoughts of him, by her love for their children, to divest herself of her unyielding spirit, and bow before the storm of displeasure that fortune sent over her head. And he implored her on her return to Rome not to irritate those who were more than a match for her, by vain competition for the mastery.' Then he had a conversation with her in private, and expired, to the grief of the provincials and the soldiers.

His death took place at Epidaphne, a suburb of Antioch. Agrippina, fully persuaded that her husband had been poisoned, had the body stripped and exposed naked in the forum of Antioch; a proceeding which Tiberius afterwards blamed, with justice, as unseemly in itself, and unjust towards Piso. But Agrippina did not thus obtain her object, for some of those who saw the corpse declared there were on it no tokens of poison. Tacitus says: 'Opinions were divided whether it bore the marks of poison or not; people formed their conclusions according as they were prejudiced in favour of Germanicus or in favour of Piso.'<sup>1</sup> Piso himself, in consciousness of his innocence, treated the charge with contempt. The most certain proof 'that the heart remained unconsumed in the funeral pyre,' which Pliny gives on the report of Vitellius, an officer present, this Tacitus did not find worth recording.

In the meantime a witch named Martina, who was believed to be a mixer of poison, and who had been seen in company with Plancina, was arrested and sent under a guard to Rome.

The lieutenants of the deceased prince took on themselves, in the absence of any regular authority, to choose a proconsul for Syria, and so shut the door against the unauthorised return of Piso. After some discussion their choice fell on Cnaeus Sentius. Agrippina herself made

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* ii. 3, says that Germanicus died 'of a lingering disorder not without suspicion of being poisoned. For livid spots appeared all over his body, and foam at his mouth.' Further, 'he never showed the smallest resentment against Piso until he found himself attacked by magical charms and imprecations.' Agrippina and her servants seem never to have settled it well in their minds *whether* Germanicus was bewitched or poisoned. That he died of a natural disorder they were resolved not to allow.

no longer stay in Syria, but embarked with her children, and, bearing the ashes of her husband, directed her course for Rome.

In the meantime, the assurance that Germanicus had breathed his last had reached the retreating proconsul, who showed, it is said, indecent exultation at the tidings; and his wife, who was in mourning for the death of her sister, threw off her trappings of woe and assumed gay-coloured garments.

Piso now called together his friends to discuss what had best be done. His dismissal from his province had been irregular; unauthorised by the prince and the senate. He might, therefore, return, dispute the right of the nominee of the officers of Germanicus, and resume his proconsular authority. His son, Marcus, however, would have dissuaded him from so daring an act, which might be interpreted by his adversaries at the capital as one near akin to treason and rebellion; and would have him rather continue his course to Rome and lay a plain statement of the circumstances of his deprivation before Tiberius.

But the bolder advice prevailed; and Piso, perhaps fearing that the story of his association with the death of Germanicus would be believed in Rome by the populace, was afraid of venturing himself among them till the first burst of unreasoning accusation was overpassed. The prow was turned; and as Piso and Plancina were proceeding with oars flashing on their way back to Syria, they encountered the mournful convoy that bore Agrippina and the ashes of Germanicus. Neither vessel would avoid the other, and they passed so close that the wailing, mourning-clad women on deck of the vessel of Agrippina could see the faces of, and hurl their imprecations against, those who, they firmly believed, had brought on them their sorrow and desolation.

On reaching Syria, Piso found that the soldiers refused to recognise him. In vain did he try all the arts of persuasion and corruption on both the men and their officers. Baffled and reduced to despair, he sued for leave to remain unmolested in the place till the question of the Syrian proconsulship should be decided by the prince. But his request was refused, and no other indulgence was accorded him than that he should be suffered to quit the country and return to Rome.

In the meanwhile, the news of the dangerous sickness of Germanicus had reached Rome, and had aroused the greatest excitement, which the party of Agrippina did their utmost to stir into a blaze. The rumour of the intrigues and crime of Piso and Plancina, 'greatly exaggerated in course of transmission,' the pathetic narratives and bitter incriminations, however unreasonable, sent home by Agrippina, had their effect. 'Now!' exclaimed the people, 'we know *why* Germanicus was banished to the extremity of the empire; *why* Piso was sent to Syria; *what was meant* by the mysterious conferences between Livia and Plancina. Verily those high up in authority looked with an evil eye on the popular spirit of their sons. *This is the reason why they are sacrificed,*

—they meditated giving the Roman people liberty and a system of equal laws.’ The courts were deserted, private houses closed, as though there was death in them.

Then came a better report, brought by some Syrian merchants, and the excitable populace rushed from despair to confidence. They broke open the temple doors, and filled the streets with shouts and songs. Tiberius did not contradict the good news, though he knew it was false. He allowed the mob to have its way with torchlight procession and a chorus, roared out by a thousand voices, ‘Rome is safe, our country safe, since Germanicus is well.’



FIG. 68.—AGRIPPINA MAJOR. Bust in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 263.

At length came the day of certainty of the worst. In a burst of grief, the people pelted the temples with stones, and turned their household gods out of doors, and upset altars. Nor were the tokens of grief confined to the Roman people. Some tributary kings sent for their barbers and bade them shave the heads of their queens, so that the palace might ring with the howls and execrations of the



bald-pated ladies ; and Suetonius assures us that so overcome with the tidings was the king of kings—the Persian monarch—that for a while he desisted from hunting.

The devotion of the senators found its vent in decreeing temples, altars, statues, to the deified Germanicus, and in inventing every sort of honour to be lavished on his memory : some zest being given to this exuberant display by the conviction that it was offensive to the emperor. He, though much shaken by the loss, and far removed from the wish to interfere with these exhibitions of enthusiasm, deemed it requisite to stop them when they transgressed the bounds of common sense. When it was proposed to erect a golden statue of the deceased prince, in the Palatine library, among the busts of the great orators and poets of antiquity, as deserving this place on account of some school-boy exercise, which was scarcely thought worthy of preservation, Tiberius rebuked the extravagance, saying : ‘ He would himself put a suitable bust there, of the size of life ; for in literature no exterior rank was of account, and it was honour enough for the prince to be placed in such distinguished company.’

Agrippina was on her way to Italy ; her voyage was rough, in the midst of the winter storms. A sad voyage for one who had traversed the same seas two years before at the side of her beloved husband, her heart full of hope and confidence in the future. Now, all that remained to her of that husband was a small urn filled with ashes, that she retained throughout the voyage beside her bed-head. On the island of Corcyra she disembarked, for she was worn out with sorrow and sickness. She required all her available strength for the heavy trial of the entry into Rome that was before her.

On hearing of her approach to Italy, all the intimate friends of the family, and most of the officers who had served under Germanicus, with a number of strangers from the neighbouring towns, rushed to Brundisium, the readiest port on her way. And as soon as the fleet appeared in the offing, walls, roofs, the port, the coast, were crowded with people sorrowing, and asking each other whether Agrippina should be received in respectful silence, or with some expression of sympathy.

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Act. 61.

‘ Nothing was settled when the fleet came sweeping slowly in, not rigged out in sprightly fashion, but wearing the ensigns of sadness. When, however, the widow descended from the ship, bearing the funeral urn in her hand, accompanied by her two infants, and with her eyes steadily fixed on the ground, one simultaneous groan burst from the entire assemblage. Tiberius had despatched two praetorian cohorts, with directions to the magistrates that all should pay the last offices of respect to the memory of his adopted son. Accordingly, the tribunes and centurions bore his ashes on their shoulders ; and before them were borne the ensigns unadorned, and the fasces reversed. As they passed

through the colonies, the populace in black, the knights in purple, burnt precious raiment, perfumes, etc. Drusus came as far as Terracina, with Claudius, the brother of Germanicus, and those of the children of the deceased who had been left at Rome. The consuls, the senate, and a great mass of people filled the road, forming a straggling procession, each walking and expressing his grief after his own fashion.<sup>1</sup>

Neither Tiberius, nor Livia, nor Antonia, the mother of the deceased, attended the funeral. Tacitus gives the reasons that were alleged, but will not decide which was nearest the truth. 'Tiberius and Livia either thought public lamentation beneath their dignity, or else they feared lest if folk peered into their faces, their hypocrisy would be discovered. Whether sickness retained Antonia, or overmuch sorrow and inability to go through the ceremony, is not known. I would rather believe that she was held back by Tiberius and Livia, who did not leave the palace, that they might seem to mourn in private.'

It was a mistake on the part of Tiberius not to take a prominent part in the funeral, but it was in keeping with his character. He was shy, and shrank from public exhibitions of all sorts. He knew that there was a vast amount of unreality in this demonstration, and that the Julian party were bent on making of it a partisan ovation, just as is done over and over again at the present day in the streets of Paris, and even in those of London.

Whatever he did was certain to be misrepresented, that Tiberius knew well; and he believed, but mistakenly, that he consulted his own dignity best by remaining at home. He was ever lacking in tact; and in this instance fell into serious error in shrinking from an unpleasant duty. That he grieved for the death of Germanicus one can hardly doubt, for he needed a man allied to himself to assist him in the provinces, and his own son Drusus could not be everywhere. A despot cannot trust large masses of men to be under one not bound by ties of blood to the dynasty. That he thoroughly understood the military incapacity of Germanicus is certain. Suetonius says: 'He affected to depreciate Germanicus, and spoke of his achievements as utterly insignificant, and treated his most glorious victories as ruinous to the State'—and he was perfectly justified in so doing. We know of these achievements of Germanicus chiefly through Tacitus, who undertook to glorify him as a hero, a second Alexander, but it is not difficult to read between the lines, and see that the victories were grossly exaggerated, the conquests were naught, and the behaviour of Germanicus in the mutiny deserving of emphatic condemnation.

Agrippina and her party did not fail to comment on the abstention of Tiberius and Livia from the funeral; and from Suetonius and Tacitus it is not difficult to gather that much provocation was afforded the emperor by the behaviour of the mob on the occasion. The most

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 1.

exaggerated praise of Agrippina and of the deceased Germanicus was shouted under the walls and cliff of the Palatine, and the cries could be heard—were perhaps intended to be heard—in the chamber where sat Tiberius. ‘All hope,’ it was declared, ‘is gone from Rome.’ A mob yelled under the emperor’s windows, ‘Return to us our Germanicus!’ and during the night libellous attacks on Livia and on Tiberius were affixed to the walls. It was no secret to the prince that he and his mother were charged by the public voice with having planned the murder of Germanicus, and with having commissioned Piso and Plancina with the execution of their plan. Tacitus has devoted two chapters to recording the wanton and malignant chatter of the populace concerning the funeral and the conduct of the prince.

The public mourning was extended over four months, and, as in the case of such mournings all shops were closed,<sup>1</sup> the inconvenience became great. Tiberius accordingly issued a proclamation, in which he stated, ‘that many illustrious Romans had died for the commonwealth, but none so universally and vehemently regretted; and it was seemly that some bounds should be placed to this demonstration. That which might be suitable to private families and little states was unsuitable to princes and imperial peoples. It was not improper to lament in the first transport of sorrow, but it was now high time to recover and compose the mind. Thus the deified Julius, on the death of his only daughter, kept his sorrow under control, and so did the deified Augustus when he lost his grandsons. Princes, like other men, are mortal, only the commonwealth is eternal, consequently let all men resume their customary avocations,’ and as the Megalesian games were approaching, he exhorted the citizens of Rome to ‘lay aside their grief’ so as to enter on the festival of the great goddess.<sup>2</sup> This piece of advice was in accordance with common sense, and was undoubtedly agreeable to the business classes; but it was remarked on, tortured to assume the ugliest aspect, and even Tacitus, who records it, is so impressed with the feelings of the writers of Agrippina’s party that he speaks of it with apparent disapproval.

Tiberius was well aware of the rancour that was entertained towards him, and of the malignant enmity that distorted all his actions and words, and that laboured to undermine respect and love for him among the people. Rising above the shouts of the populace at the interment of Germanicus was the significant cry that the deceased, and ‘he only, was of the blood of Augustus.’ When, soon after, Livilla, the wife of Drusus, herself the sister of the lamented prince, gave birth to twins, and Tiberius in his paternal exultation proudly called on the people to rejoice with him that such good fortune had befallen his house, the people received the information without response, save murmurs at

<sup>1</sup> Plut. *adv. Flaccum*.

<sup>2</sup> Germanicus died in November, the Megalesian games were celebrated in April.

an event that seemed to add weight and influence to the rival Claudian house.

Had Tiberius been the accomplished 'dissembler' he is represented to us, he would have acted the part required of him at the funeral. But he was not given to dissimulation. He detested all outward expression of feeling that was not completely real. The funeral of Germanicus was intended to be, and was, a political demonstration against himself. Knowing this, he could have turned the point had he appeared at it, made his oration, and wept. But it was not in his shy nature to face the whole of Rome with the knowledge that the real emotion he might give vent to would be at once interpreted as assumed, and with the consciousness that his every attitude and word would be turned against him. 'He was, in fact,' says Dean Merivale, 'one of those very unamiable men who subject their conduct to harsh interpretations from mere perverseness of temper, and the dislike and distrust they create in the breasts of those around them.' This is in a measure true. The lack of amiability in Tiberius was due to his being self-enclosed; slighted, thrust aside in youth and early manhood, he had been obliged to conceal his wounded feelings, and when he was suddenly elevated to the throne this reserve was so inveterate that he could not shake it off. He found himself an object of harsh and spiteful comment, found himself accused of monstrous crimes of which he was guiltless, found himself out of harmony with the light-headed Roman people. Grave, sad, thoughtful, and sensitive to every form of unkindness, he gave umbrage to the people because the gladiatorial shows that delighted them bred in him disgust; he offended the nobility because he would speak plain homely Latin in the senate instead of Greek, and treated their Hellenisation of speech and manners and morals with undisguised disdain. He did not care to attend their carousals as had Augustus, and to bandy jokes, not always choice, with them at table; he made no attempt to be hail-fellow-well-met with every man of the noble class; he lacked that homeliness that Augustus possessed, and that refined and delicate courtesy that adorned Julius Caesar,—therefore they disliked him. The same insinuations had been whispered against Augustus on the death of Drusus that were now shouted against Tiberius on the death of Germanicus. But Augustus had disarmed slander by going two hundred miles in the depth of winter to meet the bier, had conveyed it in person to the forum, and there had pronounced the funeral address, with a lavish use of the exaggerations acceptable on such occasions. Tiberius did nothing of the kind, he held back, and thus sowed the seeds of a long and deep misunderstanding between himself and his people.



## V.—THE TRIAL OF PISO.

ALL Rome was in excitement concerning the trial of Piso, supposed to be the murderer of the beloved Germanicus.

This proconsul had received the tidings of the death of Germanicus when he was at Cos, and as we have already seen, he returned to his province and endeavoured to gain over to himself the Syrian legions, and called on the princes of Cilicia to assist him with levies. When, however, civil war ensued in Syria, Piso was deserted and obliged to go to Rome, there to answer to the charge

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Aet. 61.



FIG. 69.—TIBERIUS. Head of Statue from Cervetri in the Lateran Museum,

brought against him by the friends of the deceased prince. To prepare the way he sent his son Marcus before him to Rome with letters to the emperor, containing accusations against Germanicus, and exculpations of himself. On his way Piso turned aside to see Drusus in

Illyria, who had returned to the head of his army after the funeral of his wife's brother and his father's adopted son. The brothers had been warmly attached to each other, and Piso apparently thought it advisable to disarm any resentment that might have been provoked by suspicion of foul play.<sup>1</sup> Drusus behaved in accordance with his straightforward and discreet character. To Piso's petition for protection he replied 'that he had indeed heard all kinds of gossip relative to the guilt of Piso in connection with the death of Germanicus; and,' he added, 'if there were truth in this accusation, no one would be more cut to the heart by it than himself; but he trusted that this rumour was false, and that the death of Germanicus would be the occasion of harm to no one.' Moreover, Drusus, who knew well how closely watched he was, and how his words were repeated, took care to meet Piso in public only, and absolutely refused him a private audience. Tacitus adds: 'It was not doubted but that the answer of Drusus was dictated by Tiberius; it was not probable that one otherwise artless and unguarded through youth should have practised the cunning of age.' But the conduct of Drusus in the matter is quite as likely to have been dictated by his own common sense. Tiberius could not have guessed that Piso would have diverged from his course to see Drusus.

From Illyria Piso crossed to Ancona, and thence into Umbria, where he reached the Flaminian Way. Unhappily upon the road he overtook a legion returning from Pannonia, and about to be sent into Africa. At once this accident was seized on and misinterpreted at Rome. It was said that he had 'officially mixed with the soldiers, and had courted them on their march and in their quarters.' As this was repeated to Piso, to avoid further remark he left the company of the legion, took boat at Narni, and descended the Nar into the Tiber and floated down the Tiber to Rome, where he disembarked in the Field of Mars, near the Mausoleum of the Caesars. This itself was another occasion of imputation of insolence or assurance, as the usual landing-place was further down the stream. There he was met by all the clients of the great plebeian house to which he belonged, and with assurance of innocence, and an affectation of cheerfulness, he proceeded along with his wife Plancina, to their mansion on the Palatine, that had been adorned with wreaths in token of gladness at the reception of the long-absent master. When, in honour of his return, numerous friends arrived and a festive banquet was given, the wrath of the multitude was unbounded.

The death of the poisoner Martina took place during Piso's voyage to Italy, and this fact was at once seized upon as an attempt to hide

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus says exactly the contrary, that Piso thought Drusus would be glad to hear of the removal of a rival; but he had himself informed us (*Ann.* ii. 43) that the most complete unanimity reigned between the brothers.

the crime, by silencing the mouth of one of those engaged in the conspiracy. Martina, however, had been under guard set by her enemies.

'Such being the temper of the public mind, and so strong the appearances of Piso's double guilt, there could be no lack of accusers to spring up and seize the occasion to make a show of their eloquence, their zeal for law and justice, their love for the Roman people and the family of their ruler. It might rather be apprehended that the ends of justice would be defeated by the precipitation of intemperate assailants, or even by the false play of pretended enemies. Accordingly, Fulcinius Trio, a young noble ambitious of notoriety, came forward the day after Piso's arrival to lodge an impeachment against him. The real friends of Germanicus, those to whom he had personally committed the vindication of his cause, were alarmed for the success of their maturer plans. Two of these, Vitellius and Veranius, immediately entered the court and protested against Trio's right to prosecute at all, declaring at the same time, for themselves, that they were not come to declaim in behalf of Germanicus, but to attest by their solemn evidence the fact of Piso's criminality. These representations were judged to have weight, and Trio was refused permission to make his oration against the culprit as regarded his alleged misconduct in the East; he was indulged, however, with an opportunity of uttering an harangue on the early career of Piso, and of blackening his character to the extent of his ability by a general defamation. Such were the facilities the Roman procedure gave to the young and ambitious declaimer.'<sup>1</sup>

Tiberius was well aware that this trial was likely to be of importance. The eyes of all Rome were fixed on him. The prosecutors demanded that the case should be heard by the emperor himself, and to this Piso consented. But Tiberius at once and peremptorily refused. He consented only so far as to hear what grounds were alleged for the belief that Piso was guilty, and what was the line of defence about to be taken by the accused, and then referred the entire case to the senate, for he well knew what were the imputations circulating against himself, and that a judgment delivered by himself would be liable to the suspicion of being prejudiced.

The trial in the senate was followed with feverish excitement. The emperor himself was present and opened the case with a speech, described by Tacitus as of a cautious character; it can hardly be denied by any impartial reader that it was dignified and just. He said 'that Piso had been his father's lieutenant and friend, and was appointed by himself with the sanction of the senate to be coadjutor to Germanicus in the East; whether he had there exasperated the young prince by his contumacy and his opposition, whether he had insolently rejoiced over his death, all that it was for the senate to inquire into with minds unprejudiced. If,' said Tiberius, 'it be proved that Piso exceeded the

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *History of the Romans*, v. p. 209.

limits of his commission, failed in respect to his commanding officer, and showed exultation at his decease and at my affliction, then I detest the man, and will banish him from my house. As a private individual I will punish him by private ostracism, not use against him my power as a prince. But if he be found guilty of a crime demanding vengeance, whosoever the man might be that was murdered, he would deserve punishment, and I myself will see that vengeance be granted to the children of Germanicus and to his parents. It remains further for you to investigate whether Piso really did endeavour to excite discontent and mutiny in the army; whether he did endeavour to win the affections of the soldiers by sinister arts, and to recover the province by force of arms; or whether all these charges be the exaggerations of his accusers, with whose excessive zeal I have reason to be offended. I contend that they had no right to strip the corpse and expose it to the populace, and to bruit it about among foreign nations that Germanicus had been poisoned, when this was mere conjecture, and nothing was proved. I bewail my son Germanicus; I ever shall bewail him; but I give frank permission to the accused to bring to light everything he can which he believes will help to clear him from the imputation laid upon him, and to state plainly what there was oppressive on the part of Germanicus that aggravated him. And you, senators, I implore not to prejudice the case, and to assume that the man is guilty because of the connection of the deceased with myself. If the ties of blood, the honour of friends, have attached any of you to the accused, then stand by him in his hour of peril. And I address his accusers in the same manner. Thus we have granted to Germanicus what is actually beyond legal right, that an inquest should be held on his death in this court instead of in the forum, before the whole senate instead of before the ordinary judges. In every respect observe strict impartiality.'

Two days were allowed for the accuser; six for preparation of the defence, and then three for making the defence.

Fulcinus Trio was suffered to open the accusation by a diatribe on Piso's former conduct, on his ambition, and rapacity in Spain—all which, as Tacitus says, was not to the point. Then came the main heads of accusation, formulated by the friends of the deceased. (1) That Piso had endeavoured to make a party for himself among the soldiers against Germanicus; (2) that he had shown implacable animosity towards his superior; (3) that he had removed Germanicus by poison; and (4) that he had provoked civil war.

Tacitus says in regard to the defence: 'In every article but one his defence was weak. He could not clear himself of debauching the soldiers from their duty, nor of insulting conduct to Germanicus; but he seemed to be able to clear himself of the charge of poison, a charge which the accusers themselves were incapable of substantiating. They contended that Piso had poisoned the meat eaten by Germanicus at an



entertainment given by Germanicus himself in his own house. But it appeared ridiculous, that this could have been done, when Germanicus was surrounded by his slaves and his guests, and that it could have been done under his nose without his perceiving it. Piso offered to have his own servants put on the rack, and demanded that those of Germanicus who had waited at table on the occasion should also be questioned.<sup>1</sup>

Tiberius was completely satisfied of the innocence of the accused on this charge of murder, which had been made on the idlest grounds.<sup>1</sup> But Tiberius could not exculpate Piso from having embroiled the province in civil war. A good many of the judges were so bound to uphold the view of Agrippina that they were resolved, with or without evidence, to condemn the accused as guilty of murder. One rash senator asked to have the instructions given to Piso by Tiberius produced in full court, but to this the emperor would not consent.

Meanwhile, the mob without became impatient, and their shouts and threats were borne within where the court sat. They declared that if Piso were acquitted they would tear him to pieces, and forthwith went in quest of his statues, cast them down and proceeded to drag them down the Gemonian steps leading from the Capitol, where the bodies of malefactors were exposed. Tiberius, hearing of this, promptly ordered that the mob should be forced to desist, and that the statues should be re-erected.

The accused was removed from the bar in a closed litter, attended by a tribune of the praetorians, to afford him protection from the mob.

Thus ended the first day of the defence, and Piso re-entered his stately house, with a gloomy presentiment of defeat, that was to deepen into despair when he discovered that his wife, who had loudly declared her intention of sharing his fate,—the woman who had stirred up all the ill blood between him and Germanicus,—had suddenly deserted him. Whilst Piso had been making desperate battle for his life in the senate-house, the heart of Plancina had failed, and she crept over the way, a stone's-throw distant into the house of Livia, to solicit her protection for herself. Then she returned to her own palace, that overhung the forum, and listened to the roar of the people threatening to lynch her husband. Her fears for herself prevailed, she deserted the house, took refuge with Livia, and left Piso to his fate. When, therefore, he re-entered his mansion, it was to learn that his wife had left him. These tidings broke the old man down. He was with difficulty prevailed on by his sons to nerve his resolution for a second appearance

<sup>1</sup> It was, for instance, urged that Germanicus must have died of poison, because on his funeral pyre the heart remained unconsumed; Piso replied that the same phenomenon was observed in cases of cardialgia, and he pleaded that this was the malady of Germanicus.

before his judges. There he heard the same accusations repeated, which he had met and defeated the day before, and others from which he was unable to clear himself. On all sides of him he saw angry faces, and marked a fixed resolution to destroy him. Tiberius maintained an impenetrable exterior, an appearance of impartiality which was not affected by the rest; and Piso felt that his doom was inevitable. He was borne back to his own dwelling once more, and there he called for his tablets, wrote on them a farewell letter to the prince, sealed them, and delivered them to a freedman. After that he bathed and dressed as usual for supper, and retired from the meal to his chamber. There he was visited by his wife, who remained with him till late. After her departure he shut the door, and was found within, next morning, with his throat cut, and his sword lying at his side.

When the senate met and learned what had taken place, suspicions awoke, and the emperor was charged in whispers with having contrived this opportune death, just after the demand had been made for the production of the correspondence that had passed between himself and the accused. Tacitus at this place incautiously reveals to us the questionable sources whence he drew so much of his authority for imputations of murder and foul play. 'I remember to have heard old people mention,' says he, 'that Piso had often certain papers in his hand, the contents of which he did not publicly divulge; but that his friends used to assert that these were the instructions actually addressed to him by Tiberius regarding the unfortunate Germanicus. These, it was said, he resolved to lay before the senators, and to reveal the real guilt of the prince, but Sejanus, the confidant of Tiberius, dissuaded him by false hopes from his purpose. They added that he did not kill himself, but was, in point of fact, assassinated.' Tacitus cautions his reader that this is not ascertained as certainty. Now Tacitus has himself told us that when the instructions were demanded, Tiberius objected, and Piso refused to produce them,—consequently, there was no need for the murder of the unfortunate man. There is, moreover, sufficient ground for believing that he committed suicide, considering himself to be lost, and being completely unnerved by the cowardice of his wife in deserting him. Had he waited for his condemnation, his goods would have been confiscated, and his sons reduced to poverty. By forestalling judgment he saved the property for them, and this was the reason why, in so many cases, men accused and despairing of discharge, did lay violent hands on themselves.

As the senate sat, uncertain how to proceed, the tablets of the dead man were brought to Tiberius; he cut the string and opened them before the conscript fathers, and read the last appeal of Piso to his clemency.

It ran thus: 'Oppressed by a combination of my enemies, and by the odium of crimes of which I am not guilty,—as I find no place left

here for truth and innocence, I appeal to the immortal gods to testify that I have ever lived in sincere loyalty to you, Caesar, and with reverence towards your mother. I implore your protection and hers for my sons. Cnaeus had no share in those things laid to my charge, for he was all the while at Rome; and my son Marcus used his best endeavour to dissuade me from returning to Syria. O that I, old man that I am, had listened to him, though a boy, instead of making him follow my advice. He is innocent, and I pray he may not be involved in the punishment decreed for my guilt. I entreat you, by my devoted services during five-and-forty years,—I, who had the approbation of your father Augustus, and your friendship, when I was consul along with you,—I, who will never be able to ask for another favour, I implore you to have mercy on my unhappy son.’ There was not a word concerning Plancina. This letter fully bears out what has been said. The old man was mortified, cut to the quick by the conduct of his wife, and his whole solicitude was for his children. To assure their patrimony to them he slew himself.

Tiberius, as was natural, was deeply moved when he read this letter. The gallant, rough soldier had earned his regard; he knew that the accusation of murder against him was maliciously got up and utterly false. He at once demanded of the senate the discharge of Marcus Piso:—the lad, he said, ‘obeyed his father’s orders—which no son could disobey.’ To this the senate agreed. The prosecutors of Piso now turned their energies to the condemnation of Plancina, and to haggling over the fortune of Piso—whether any of it was to be confiscated, and if so, how much.

Plancina was in great danger. The current of popular feeling ran strong against her; and all the silly charges of witchcraft and poison were being raked up again. Tiberius was urged by Livia to support the woman whom she took under her protection, and he did so; he spoke in her favour, ‘hesitatingly,’ says Tacitus, ‘with shame and guilt, alleging the importunity of his mother.’ Tiberius was annoyed at the interference of Livia, and this annoyance betrayed itself in his manner. His nervous hesitation was treated as an exhibition of conscious guilt and shame. Tacitus gives us a chapter filled with the comments of the party of Agrippina: ‘Was it right for a grandmother to admit to her sight the murderess of her grandson?—to rescue her from condemnation by the senate? How is it that Tiberius and his mother are so anxious to have Plancina safe? For very good reasons—that she may be employed to try her poisons on Agrippina, and on her children.’

Finally, after two days ‘wasted in the semblance of a trial,’ as Tacitus says, sentence was given, ‘that the name of Piso should be erased from the annals, that part of his estate should be confiscated, part granted to Cnaeus, who should be constrained to change his name; also that Marcus should be deprived of his dignities, and

be banished for ten years, on an annuity of fifty thousand sesterces; and that Plancina should be let off on consideration of the request of the Augusta.<sup>1</sup>

The sentence was monstrous, and Tiberius refused to allow it to be carried out. He said that Marcus Antonius, who had fought against his country, still had his name inscribed on the annals; Piso had acted under a misapprehension as to who was really in authority in Syria, and it was unjust that his name should be blotted out for such an error of judgment. He refused to ratify the condemnation of Marcus Piso, and refused to allow the confiscation of any part of his inheritance. 'From shame at having screened Plancina,' so Tacitus puts it, 'he was inclined to mercy.'

Then, with a covert sneer, Valerius Messalinus rose to propose that a golden statue should be erected to Mars, the Avenger, and that public thanks should be coupled therewith to Tiberius, Livia, Agrippina, and Drusus, 'for having avenged the death of Germanicus.' As the case for the prosecution on the head of murder had broken down from lack of evidence, this was a reassertion of the charge and a committal of the senate to the view that a murder had been committed. Tiberius again interfered; he declined the honour, and refused the golden statue. 'Such monuments,' said he, 'were only fit to be erected after a victory over foreign foes. Domestic calamities should be buried in the griefs that attended them.' A few days later, Tiberius invited the senate to confer the dignity of senator on the prosecutor of Piso, as a concession to public feeling, and he added a bit of wise counsel to Trio, 'not to embarrass his eloquence with impetuosity.'

Thus ended this remarkable trial. It needs a very prejudiced eye not to see that throughout Tiberius acted with cool judgment and even-handed justice, in the midst of the ferment of popular feeling, when most minds were thrown off their balance.

Plancina lived on for fifteen years, and finally died by her own hand to escape sentence for crimes of which she was again accused, the particulars of which we do not know.

There were other cases besides that of Plancina in which Livia interfered to the embarrassment of Tiberius. Such was that of Urgulania, a woman of whom Tacitus says, that she seemed to suppose 'the favour of Livia set her above the laws.' When she was required as a witness in a certain trial before the senate, she was summoned and refused to attend. Then a praetor was sent to examine her in her own house; a thing unheard of before; for even the vestal virgins obeyed a summons. On another occasion she was prosecuted for a sum of money, and she took refuge with Livia in her palace, and refused to appear in court and answer the summons. The aged Augusta upheld

<sup>1</sup> The title of Julia Augusta was conferred on Livia after her adoption into the Julian gens on the death of Augustus.



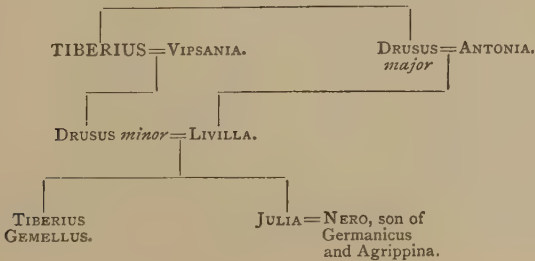
her, and Tiberius was placed in a difficult position. He sent to his mother to say that he would himself defend Urgulania if she appeared. Then he leisurely walked to the court, with the guards at a distance behind him. He prolonged the time, talking with his friends, till Livia, finding it impossible to persist, paid the money for which Urgulania was sued rather than suffer her to appear in answer to the summons. In this instance Tacitus is obliged to admit that Tiberius behaved with discretion, and so as to meet with general approval.

This woman Urgulania was endowed with indomitable will and great energy of character. When her grandson Plautus Silvanus was accused of having murdered his wife, she sent him a dagger and bade him put an end to himself, and not undergo the disgrace of a public trial.

The trial of Piso was hardly over before news reached Tiberius of the death of Vipsania, his wife whom he had so dearly loved, and who after her divorce had married Asinius Gallus. Whether his faith in her had been shaken by the reports that she had been false to him we can hardly tell. Possibly these reports were circulated in order to induce him to submit to the will of Augustus and separate from her. He was now sixty-one years old, a solitary man; his only female friend and adviser was Livia, his somewhat exacting and imperious mother. It is not impossible to suppose that the lonely man, susceptible to kindness, and sensitive to pain, must have felt the death of the only woman he had passionately loved, and with whom he had lived at one time—thirty years before—in such concord. Unquestionably she had seen and spoken with her son Drusus, and had felt the same pride in him that did Tiberius, and, separated as they were, Drusus was, and could not fail to be, a bond between them. Little did the aged emperor imagine, when he shut himself into his closet, on hearing of the death of Vipsania, how soon it was to be followed by that of his and her son.

#### VI.—THE DEATH OF DRUSUS.

We have already heard of one, Aelius Sejanus, sent to be adviser to the young Drusus, on the occasion of a mutiny in Pannonia that broke out shortly after the accession of Tiberius. This man now steps



to the forefront and becomes an important actor in the terrible tragedy of the Caesars.

Lucius Aelius Sejanus was of equestrian rank, and was born at Vulsinium in Etruria. Handsome, well built, able and ambitious, he resolved to make his fortune as best he could, and he began by attaching himself to the person of the young Caius Caesar. But on his patron's sudden and early death he transferred himself to the service of Tiberius,



FIG. 70.—DRUSUS MINOR. Bust in Museum Torlonia.

and the very contrast of their characters tended to give him great, and in time unbounded influence over his master. Tiberius was timid and self-distrusting; Sejanus assured and resolute, and his self-confidence imposed on the diffident and hesitating emperor. He was given the command over the praetorian cohorts, and this charge placed him in a position of strict intimacy with the emperor, over whose personal safety it was his duty to watch. 'Tiberius required a staff to lean upon, and Sejanus was strong enough and bold enough to supply one

Anxious as the new emperor was, from his first accession, to know everything, and to do everything himself; impatient as he was of leaving affairs to take their course under a wise but distant superintendence, and jealous of all interference with his own control; yet, finding day by day, that the concerns of his vast administration were slipping away beyond the sphere of his personal guidance, from the inability of any single mind to embrace them altogether, he was reduced to the necessity of falling back on extraneous assistance, and he preferred, from the character of his mind, to draw irregular aid from a favourite domestic, rather than throw irresponsible power into the hands of his remote vicegerents.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of the great trial of Piso had not allayed the ferment in men's minds. The protection extended to Plancina had inflamed to the fiercest fury the glowing passion for revenge in the heart of Agrippina. She and her adherents made it an article of faith that Germanicus had been poisoned, and a sacred duty to revenge that murder. 'All the best people,' says Tacitus—he counts the oligarchical party (*optimi*) alone as good folks—'all these,' says he, 'broke out into secret complaints with augmented vehemence.' The honour shown to Vitellius and Veranius, accusers of Piso, could not pacify the fierce hatred, which never flagged in intriguing against the emperor and his mother, and which could be allayed by no kindnesses, no forbearance.

Tiberius at once took steps to open the way to honours for the sons of Germanicus. He introduced the eldest of the orphans, Nero, aged seventeen, to the senate, and asked that he might be permitted to enter on the quaestorship five years before the legitimate age. He conferred on him the priestly office, and betrothed him to Julia, daughter of his own son Drusus, and gave presents to all the Roman people on the day that the young prince assumed the manly toga. The same favour he showed to Drusus, the second son of Germanicus, when three years later he obtained his recognition as of man's estate.

To the great satisfaction of Tiberius, moreover, his son Drusus assumed a fatherly attitude towards the orphan boys, and treated them with much affection. Even his enemies were forced grudgingly to admit that, 'however difficult it might be for power and unanimity to subsist between equals, Drusus was kind, and certainly not ill-disposed towards these youths.'

The year A.D. 23 was fatal to Tiberius. Hitherto his government had been admirable, and on the whole had been, but for the loss of Germanicus, prosperous. Peace and order reigned in the empire; the Roman arms were victorious in the field, and the routine of government was carried on with equity and system. Discipline was restored among the troops, and never had the

A.U.C. 776.  
A.D. 23.  
Act. 64.

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, v. p. 226.

provinces thriven with such freedom from extortion. The finances were flourishing, and the private virtues of the emperor, and his sincerity in maintaining justice, gained him general respect. His son, a fine and vigorous youth, was springing up at his side to serve as his regent, a man on whom he could rely, who was a favourite with the people, and, though not without faults, was able in head and sound in heart. Tiberius had every reason to look hopefully forward to the future, to his immediate relief from overstrain of work, and ultimately to his place being filled by his own son, and the dynasty securely established. Drusus was united to a sister of Germanicus, and he hoped, therefore, that in him the old partisan hatreds might cool down and expire.

Tiberius loved Drusus as he had loved the mother Vipsania, but his love did not suffer him to spoil his son. Drusus had been brought up with great strictness, and inured to hard work. When quite young he had acted with spirit and ability in the field against the Rhaetians, along with his kinsman Germanicus, his senior by two years. In his seventeenth year Augustus had suffered him to assist at the sessions of the senate. On the death of Augustus he was consul-designate. When hardly twenty-four he had subdued the mutiny in Pannonia with an energy, promptitude, and success that contrasted favourably with the conduct of Germanicus on a like occasion. In war against the peoples on the Danube he had exhibited military ability and political address. Moreover, to the great satisfaction of his father, he kept himself completely aloof from the intrigues and rancours of the rival parties. He loved Germanicus, he was devotedly attached to his wife, the sister of Germanicus, and fond of the orphan children of his brother-in-law.

Drusus was a different man from Germanicus in many points; rough and blunt, he lacked the cultured tastes of the other, could not speak in public without a written page under his eyes, and was not interested in antiquities or in art. He was passionate, and loved a debauch when he came home from the wars. On one occasion he boxed Sejanus on the ears. Once he had a bout with his fists, and knocked over a Roman knight who had offended him, whereupon the people nicknamed him Castor. But he harboured ill-will against no man. He loved gladiatorial shows, which filled his father with disgust; and his rashness and impetuosity sometimes cost Tiberius anxiety. The emperor was heard on one occasion to reprimand his son with the words: 'As long as I live I will tolerate no acts of violence; and I will take care that after I am dead you shall not do them.'

But the people loved him. A man who was open as the day, not reserved, who was not squeamish over bloodshed, who drank and roistered, and knocked men about with his fists one day, and next day laughed and shook hands, was a prince after their own heart.

In the year 21 Drusus was colleague with his father in the consulship; then the old man left Rome early in the year to make a long



stay in Campania, partly because his health was feeble, but chiefly in order that, by his absence, his son might be given an opportunity of exercising all the duties of the consulship unrestrained. He was contemplating the raising of Drusus to be his coadjutor to relieve himself of the burden of government, which he felt was more than he was able to endure alone. Drusus answered all his expectations by the tact and skill with which he conducted business, and so satisfied his father, that he conferred on him the tribunician authority for the ensuing year, thus formally proclaiming him regent along with himself. The straightforward and natural manner in which Tiberius addressed the senate on this matter is admitted even by Tacitus, who says: 'In the beginning of his letter he besought the gods "that they would prosper his counsels in behalf of the republic," and then added a guarded testimony to the qualities of the young prince, without any false exaggerations; he said that "Drusus had a wife and three children, and was quite as old as he himself was when called to the tribunician office by Augustus; that Drusus was not now adopted precipitately by him as partner in the toils of government; but that, having had eight years' proof of his abilities in the suppression of seditions, the conclusion of wars, in the honour of a triumph and in two consulships, he could rely on him."' As long as Germanicus lived, Tiberius was uncertain which of the two to select as regent with him, but now that Germanicus was dead, he had no choice.

The senate, with fulsome adulation, at once granted what was so modestly asked. Only the dependants in the Julian faction sneered to each other at the simplicity of the tone of the letter, and remarked that Drusus showed princely insolence in not coming personally from Campania to thank the senate for this compliment paid him, but in writing his thanks instead. However, the great mass of men were pleased that the dynasty was secure, and the risk of civil war put away.

All now seemed prosperous in the house of Tiberius, when suddenly the bolt fell which ruined all his hopes, at the very moment when the emperor saw open before him the prospect of a tranquil old age, free from cares and overwork.

Scarcely was Drusus established in the regency before he fell ill. Tiberius did not consider his sickness to be serious; he supposed it was the result of over-eating. A few days after, Drusus was dead. He died at the age of thirty-three. The father, who saw all his hopes and ambitions cut down, was deeply pained, but maintained his dignity and self-control. During his son's illness he had taken his accustomed place in court daily, and continued his business, not supposing the case to be serious. But when Drusus was dead, he went direct from the death-bed to the senate-house. Tacitus describes the scene: 'Finding the consuls, in testimony of their grief, seated on the ordinary benches, he admonished them to consider their dignity and resume their proper

places. The senators burst into tears; but Tiberius, suppressing even a sigh, in a speech uttered without hesitation, thus addressed them. He said 'that he was well aware that he had laid himself open to censure for having thus, in the first throb of grief, exposed himself to the view of the senate. Most mourners,' he said, 'ill endure the consolations offered by their kinsfolk, scarce look on the face of day, and are not charged with weakness for so doing. He, however, sought more manly solace in throwing himself on the bosom of the commonwealth.' Then he spoke feelingly of 'the extreme old age of his mother and the tender age of his grandson, of his own term of life advancing to its close,' and he desired that the children of Germanicus might be introduced as the great alleviation for the present evil. The consuls thereupon went for them, and with cheering words to the young princes introduced them to the house and placed them before the emperor. He took them by their hands, and said: 'Conscript fathers! these fatherless youths I committed to their uncle, and I besought him that, though he had issue of his own, he would rear and nourish them just as his own children, and train them up to be worthy of himself and of posterity. Drusus is taken from us: to you I address the same prayers. In the presence of all the gods, in the face of your country, I conjure you, receive them into your protection, take into your custody the grandchildren of Augustus, children sprung of ancestry most glorious in the annals of the state. Towards them, I pray you, fulfil your duty. To you, Nero, and to you, Drusus, I now address myself: regard these senators as your fathers. Remember that such are the circumstances of your birth, that the good or the evil that touches you affects likewise the whole commonwealth.'

Tacitus says that so far all was well, but when, after this, Tiberius spoke about the restoration of the republic and the consuls reasserting their authority, it was believed that he was insincere, and he roused mistrust. But the old man was sincere. He felt his health and powers failing him, and he knew that there was no one now old enough and prudent enough in his own house to assist him.

Not till eight years after did Tiberius discover—even suspect—that he had lost his son by poison, and that the man who had taken him off was his own most intimate friend and confidant. It was even so.

Sejanus was alarmed at the appointment of Drusus, who disliked him, saw through him, and had warned his father against him. In an altercation that had taken place between the favourite and the son, Drusus had lost his temper and had struck Sejanus in the face. The favourite knew that as soon as ever Tiberius resigned the reins of power into the hands of his son, his overthrow was certain to ensue, sooner or later. His only hope of maintaining his place was through the death of Drusus. But that was not all. Tiberius was now old and in failing health; he could not expect to live many years. Sejanus resolved to

secure himself a place against the death of Tiberius. He entered into negotiations with the party of Agrippina. Being a handsome man, he paid court to Livilla, the wife of Drusus. He divorced his own wife, Apicata, and proposed to get rid of Drusus, that he might marry Livilla.<sup>1</sup>

It is hard not to suspect that Agrippina was privy to this infamous plot. Germanicus had fallen by poison, administered by orders of Tiberius, so she doubtless argued. The course of justice had been hampered, and punishment had not been meted out to the wrongdoers. But judgment should be administered—eye for eye and tooth for tooth—secretly, as it could not be done openly. By the same means as Tiberius had smitten down Germanicus, so, at the same age and in the same manner should his son be smitten down. All that was proved—eight years after—was that a poison had been administered by an eunuch, Lygdus, and the physician, Eudemus, as contrived by Sejanus and Livilla. Who else were engaged in this plot was not allowed to transpire. If Agrippina had any part in it, her daughter was careful not to say so in her Memoirs.

The funeral of Drusus was conducted with great pomp, with the stately procession of the figures of the ancestors, beginning with Aeneas, the mythical father of the Julian race, and with Romulus, the no less mythical founder of Rome. Then followed the wax busts of the Sabine nobles, Attus Clausus, and all the illustrious Claudii in long succession, accompanying the son and heir of the first of the Claudian princes to his last resting-place in the mausoleum of Augustus.

Drusus had left two sons, twins; one died soon after his father, and the survivor, Tiberius Gemellus, was a delicate child, on whose life no great confidence could be built.

Tiberius himself delivered the funeral oration over his son, and Seneca, then aged twenty, was an eye-witness of the scene, and briefly in a letter describes his reminiscence: 'The Caesar Tiberius kept complete control over himself as he spoke from the rostrum. He stood upright before the body, from which he was removed by a veil, as in the capacity of Pontifex Maximus he might not look on the corpse, and whilst the assembled Roman populace wept, he did not move a muscle. Sejanus (the murderer) stood at his side and seemed to derive from his observation the idea that the emperor bore the loss of his relatives very easily.'

After the funeral, which had cost Tiberius an effort, he withdrew to the inner part of the palace and refused to see the friends of his deceased son, amongst whom was the Jewish prince Agrippa. He could not bear to speak with them, so keenly did he feel his loss, and so incapable was he of further maintaining his composure.

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus calls her Livia; Suetonius gives the form Livilla, which I have adopted here to avoid confusion in the mind of the reader.

In the same year that Tiberius lost his son and his grandson he was deprived of his oldest and trustiest friend, Lucilius Longus. Two years before he had lost another dear and tried friend, Sulpicius Quirinius. And now this unhappy prince was left leaning on the shoulder of the very man who had contrived the death of his son, and was profoundly ignorant and unsuspecting of the treachery of Sejanus. At this very time, moreover, began an estrangement from his mother, for which he was not responsible.

For five-and-twenty years Livia had been the wife of the ruler of the world, and had been accustomed to use her influence with her husband, in many ways affecting his policy. She was a clever woman, and her woman's wit and woman's tact often told her what course was best in an emergency, and Augustus listened to her and followed her counsel. When Augustus died, and Tiberius succeeded, Livia supposed that she was to occupy a position of even higher authority with her son than she had with her husband. Tiberius had ever shown her deference. When he was prince she demanded that her voice should be heard. Tacitus tells us that she was exceedingly ambitious of power in her old age, and that she meddled in matters in a manner most irksome and vexatious. We have had a couple of instances of her interference when she screened Plancina and Urgulania. The position of the prince was difficult. Livia was over seventy when Tiberius began his reign, and old age intensifies self-will, encourages caprice, and does not quicken the mental faculties. Caius, who could sometimes say a pointed thing, was wont to speak of her as 'an Ulysses in petticoats.'

Tiberius, though shy, was not haughty. 'Among his friends he lived on the footing of a private individual. He backed them up in court, attended their sacrificial feasts, and visited them when sick. He even made the funeral oration over some of them. He wished his mother to behave in like manner, so far as her position suffered her, partly that there might be a similarity in their procedure, but partly also to curb somewhat her pride. In fact she assumed a loftier tone than had any woman before her, expecting to be waited on by the senators and the people—and it was only into the senate-house, the assemblies of the people, and the camp that she did not venture to intrude, otherwise she took on herself to play the autocrat. She had exercised much influence in the lifetime of Augustus, and now, as she pretended that she had made Tiberius prince, she demanded a share in the government, and even precedence over him. Consequently, much was introduced that did not at all agree with ancient customs; and some proposed to have her entitled the Mother of the country, the *Genetrix*. Others wanted Tiberius to assume her name; as Greeks take that of their fathers, that so should he take on that of his mother after his own name. Tiberius was not pleased with this, and accepted very few of the honours lavished on him, and insisted on her behaving with more discretion.



Once when she had erected a statue to Augustus at her own cost, she wanted, at the dedication, to invite and banquet all the senate and the knights with their wives ; but Tiberius interfered and forbade it, till she had obtained the consent of the senate, and then allowed her to entertain the women only ; the men he himself feasted.<sup>1</sup>

As far as was compatible with reason, Tiberius humoured his mother, but it was not possible for him to allow her a free hand, without loss of dignity to himself and confusion in the affairs of state. Though he had to refuse some of her demands, it was always done with deference and delicacy.

Livia bitterly resented this unliability, and scenes ensued which must have been painful to the son. The angry old lady often threw in his teeth that she had made him what he was, that he owed the favour of Augustus and his position at the head of the state to her. Lampoons relative to 'the ungrateful son' were scattered broadcast, the composition probably of her favourite, Fufius Geminus. Then ensued a final and effectual break between them, the occasion of which is characteristic of both. She had been insisting on the nomination of a most unsuitable person to a judgeship, and had been refused. At length Tiberius yielded to her insistence, with the proviso that in announcing the appointment he should declare that it was done solely to gratify his mother. This roused Livia to exasperation, and she had recourse to a truly feminine retort. She ran to her cabinet, and from a secret drawer produced some old letters, private letters written to her by Augustus, in which were harsh and impatient judgments on the character, and on the manners, and deportment of Tiberius. These, in a towering passion, she read out to her son. Tiberius had ever felt the warmest and most reverential love for Augustus, who had, indeed, at one time misunderstood him, but had come in the end thoroughly to value and respect him. This cruel blow from a dead man's hand wounded his sensitive heart to the quick. Suetonius says: 'So much was he offended at these letters having been hoarded up so long, and at their production against him, with such asperity, that it is held, this was one principal reason why he retired into seclusion.'

He never after saw his mother, save once, and that for a brief interview. With her own hand she had snapped the tie that bound him to her ; he had lost father, brother, wife, and son—and now he had lost his mother.

In her fashion, Livia did good. She was liberal with her money, and assisted those in need. She brought up a good number of children, orphans apparently, at her own cost, and gave dowries to needy maidens in honourable families that they might be well married.

We have more trustworthy portraits of the Augusta Livia in her old age than when she was young. Especially good is the intaglio at Florence

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cass. lvii. 11, 12.

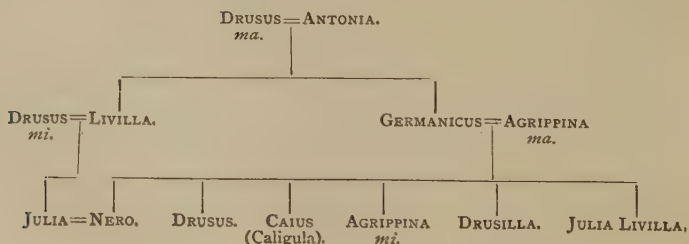
that represents her with Tiberius. At Paestum were found, by the Marquis of Salamanca, colossal statues of Tiberius and Livia (Fig. 74); the likeness in that of Livia to the profile on the Florence sardonyx is not to be mistaken (see Fig. 71, *Frontispiece*).

#### VII.—AGRIPPINA.

WE have reached that point in the drama when it becomes necessary to consider closely the character of that woman who, by her ambition, her blind hate, and her unbroken resolution, brought ruin on her own house as well as on that of the Claudians.

Agrippina, as we know, was the daughter of Vipsanius Agrippa and of Julia, daughter of Octavius. She was born about B.C. 14, and married Germanicus, son of Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, in A.D. 5. On the death of Germanicus she was thirty-two, and had three sons living—Nero, the eldest, born A.D. 6; Drusus, the second, born A.D. 7; and Caius (Caligula), born A.D. 12. Of daughters she had three—Agrippina, born A.D. 15; Drusilla, born A.D. 17; and Julia Livilla, born A.D. 18.

It was true that these children, through their father, inherited the Claudian blood, but that, in the eyes of their mother, was sanctified by the admixture of her own, derived through her mother only from the Julian sacred stock, and that again only by the female side, for the mother of Octavius was sister of C. Julius Caesar. There was, however, already a divine halo surrounding the head of Octavius, and she could flatter herself that she inherited his blood through his only daughter, and transmitted it to her children. She forgave the inferiority of family in her husband because she loved him sincerely, but she was not blind to his intellectual feebleness and lack of ambition. When with Germanicus on the Rhine, she assumed a position of authority unusual for a Roman matron, and one that provoked the comment of Tiberius. 'What!' said he, 'a woman pay visits of inspection to the companies, attend the standards, and distribute largesses! As if she did not court them enough, carrying her child in a soldier's accoutrements about the camp,



and desiring that he should be called Caesar Caligula. Already Agrippina is in higher credit with the army than the lieutenant-generals (*legati*), even than the generals (*duces*), for she has suppressed a sedition which the princely authority failed to put down.' These complaints were not groundless. Agrippina displayed an energy, a forwardness on the frontier that provokes suspicion that she was endeavouring to make a party in her favour among the soldiers. And Tiberius was aware that she belonged heart and soul to the Julian faction that hated him with a hatred unquenchable save in blood. Whatever Agrippina may have desired, Germanicus did not harbour ambitious views, and resolutely put from him all invitations to rebel against Tiberius. He himself had no claims to the throne: he was the son of Livia's second son.

The years spent on the banks of the Rhine were the happiest in the life of Agrippina, years of independence and power. They were the last of happiness in her career. Away from Rome, from her enemies, loved by the army, respected by the Gauls, feared by the Germans, she had formed about her a court, and a small empire in the empire. Tiberius recalled Germanicus, and sent him to the East. Agrippina accompanied her husband, and there Germanicus died in her arms.

From that moment a settled, ineradicable conviction took hold of her, the more settled and ineradicable because unreasonable, that her husband had been murdered by order of Tiberius and Livia, and from that moment, accordingly, there was no truce in the conflict waged between them. Tiberius was acquainted with her character, and knew what she attributed to him. He bore her no resentment, he pitied her, at the same time that she irritated him by her machinations. He took no measures to restrain her, though she filled Rome and the world with false reports concerning him, and assembled about her in the capital all the discontented and envious. Agrippina was a woman without the power of controlling her feelings, of veiling her eyes, and mastering her tongue. Tacitus has described her in a few words: 'She was somewhat too vindictive; yet through her chastity and love for her husband, this unbending spirit assumed a good direction.' Elsewhere he says: 'Impatient of an unequal lot, and eager to rule, she sacrificed the vices of her sex to masculine ambition.' And in another place, to describe her persistence in resentment, he uses two words full of force: he says she was *pervicax irae*.

On his deathbed, her husband earnestly cautioned her against yielding to her indomitable spirit and resolution to accomplish her ends; but no words of his availed. Without bit or bridle this 'she-wolf,' as Dean Merivale designates her, pursued her headlong way till she had brought desolation on her own house.

There is considerable difficulty in determining what statues and busts represent Agrippina. All those attributed to her have to be brought to the test of resemblance to the medals struck in her honour.



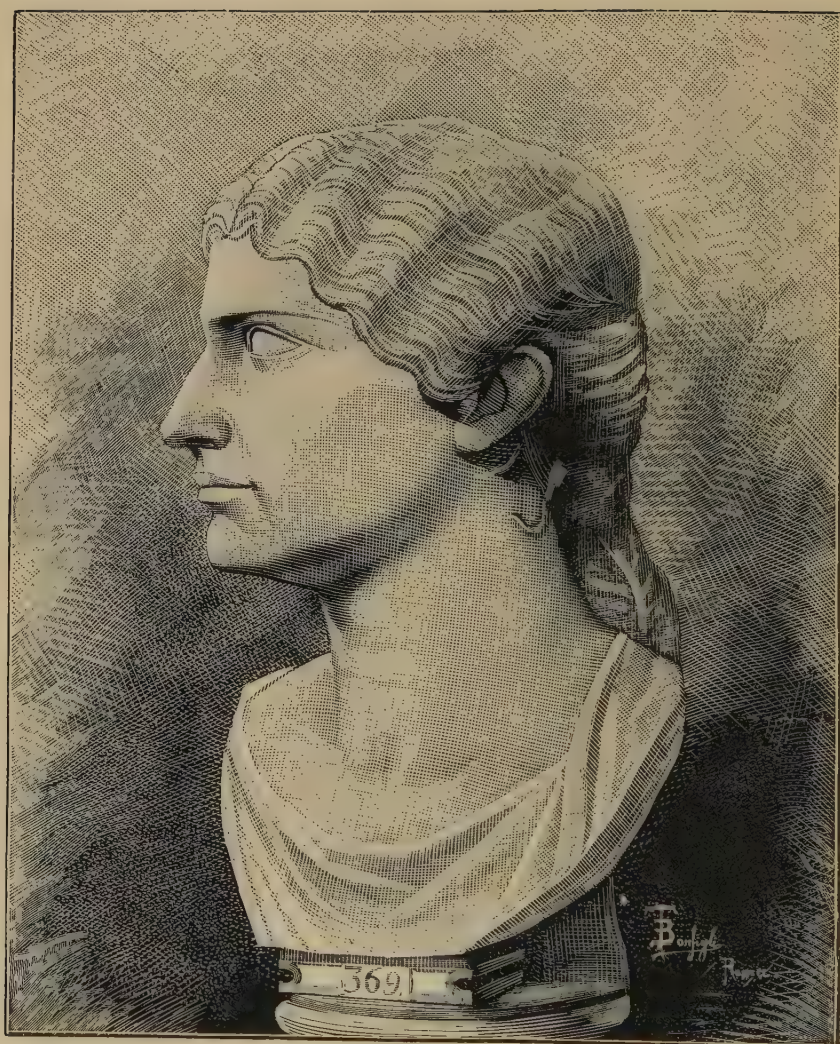


FIG. 72.—AGRIPPINA MAJOR. Bust in the Museum Chiaramonti, No. 369.



In these, what impresses one chiefly is the beautifully formed head. The features are good, but not very characteristic of a woman of force of will.

There are numerous statues and busts that are supposed to represent Agrippina, but they differ so much the one from the other, that it is not possible to admit that all are portraits of the wife of Germanicus. Moreover, in the majority it is quite impossible to read any signs of a domineering and fierce spirit. The exquisite seated lady in the Capitoline Museum, generally regarded as Agrippina, belongs, by the fashion of her hair, to the Flavian period, and cannot possibly be the wife of Germanicus. It is otherwise with a bust in the Vatican (Figs. 72 and 78). (Chiaramonti, No. 369.) This is a glorious portrait. The eager eye, the agitated mouth, the determined jaw, the delicate nose, the look of mingled distress and rage in this wonderful bust, can belong to but one woman of that epoch—Agrippina the elder. Moreover, the brow is that of her father, Agrippa (compare Fig. 41). In the same gallery is a second, but immeasurably inferior (Fig. 68). There is, however, another, very fine, in the Chigi Palace (Fig. 75).

In the great trial of Piso and Plancina, Tiberius was led by complaisance for his mother to commit a fatal blunder. He threw his protecting mantle over Plancina, because Livia was resolved to save her, and thus afforded Agrippina a handle against him. He had purposed in no way to interfere with the trial, to maintain complete impartiality, but Livia overruled his purpose, and, though his interference was to protect Plancina from a gross injustice, yet Agrippina was able to assert that she was withdrawn from judgment because the emperor and his mother did not dare to suffer the trial to proceed.

He made another mistake in obtaining the nomination of Nero, Agrippina's eldest son, to the pontificate five years before he had reached the lawful age. He did it to soothe the harrowed feelings of the widow, but he ought to have known that nothing he could do would appease her anger and turn aside her resentment. The favour was accepted, not as a free gift, but as a meagre acknowledgment of wrong done to the father and mother of the child, was taken as a weak attempt at compensation.

Tiberius was brought into close contact with three women in his own family of remarkable character, against whom he had to contend in secret, and who conspired to render his life one of trouble. His wife, Julia, dishonoured him openly, and he was unable to resist her secret machinations against him with her father. His mother, Livia, had held him in bonds, then let him go from under her control, and then again tried to master him. Lastly, Agrippina, his niece, used all her power, her influence, her position, to break down the confidence his subjects had in him, and to alienate their hearts from him. When he had her before him, with her defiant face, her eyes glaring with anger, her brows

knitted, when he heard her deep voice quiver with ill-suppressed animosity, he felt that she was the worst enemy with whom he had to contend.

One day Claudia Pulchra, a kinswoman, was brought to trial for adultery and poisoning. Agrippina believed that the blow was levelled against herself. She flew in quest of Tiberius, and found him standing before the statue of Augustus making oblation of incense. Agrippina, 'ever vehement, and now in a flame on account of Claudia,' burst into indecent rebuke. 'What!' said she, 'offering victims to the deified Augustus at the same time that you persecute his children! His divine spirit is not transfused into dumb statues. The true images of Augustus are his living descendants, in whose veins flows his celestial blood. Claudia is one of these—now in danger. But she is set up to be aimed at because she loved me devotedly. She forgot to take warning from the fate of Sosia.'<sup>1</sup> Tiberius laid hold of Agrippina by the hand and answered in a Greek verse: 'My little woman,

No hurt to thee is done that thou dost not reign.'

After this he refused to speak to her.

Tacitus tells us where he picked up his account of another scene, next to be related. It was from the memoirs of Agrippina the Younger, daughter of Agrippina the Elder, who was a witness of the incident.

The widow of Germanicus was ill, and Tiberius, forgetting the cause of resentment he had against her, paid his niece a visit. Agrippina had found out that, notwithstanding her masculine will and her Julian pride of blood, there must be a man to head her party. She desired to have a second husband, a man of more ambition and energy than Germanicus. She was occupied with this consideration when Tiberius entered her room. She received him in gloomy silence, and then burst into tears. He remained waiting uneasily for the storm that would break; presently she turned on the emperor with passion, and exclaimed: 'Why do you not relieve my solitude? Why do you not give me a husband? I am young enough for the married state. To virtuous women there is no consolation like that of marriage; and there are men in Rome who would think it no dishonour to accept the widow of Germanicus and his children.'

Tiberius knew very well what her meaning was, and that she was thinking of Asinius Gallus. Startled by the demand, not able at the

<sup>1</sup> The case of Sosia, to which Agrippina referred, was an unreasonable one for her to quote against Tiberius. Sosia was the wife of Caius Silius, and Silius was impeached for extortion of the tributaries in Gaul and in Germany, and Tacitus admits that he had been guilty of the charge. His wife Sosia had helped him, as the wives of governors were wont to do, in grinding money out of the provincials. But Sosia was prosecuted, not by Tiberius, or any creature of his, but by Asinius Gallus, the man of all others Tiberius hated, as he had married his Vipsania, and had boasted that he had intrigued with her before the divorce. Not only so, but Asinius Gallus was intimately attached to Agrippina, and if Tiberius would have suffered it, Agrippina would have married him.

moment to frame an answer, Tiberius rose from his seat and left the sick-room without a word.

Agrippina had no power over her tongue. To say something bitter and wounding solaced her for the troubles she endured. One day she met Domitius Afer, who had prosecuted her cousin, Claudia Pulchra, and after that Quintilius Varus, the son of Claudia. Afer was a native of Nemausus, the modern Nîmes, and one of the most brilliant orators of the age. As Domitius saw Agrippina coming down the street, he turned aside, knowing her violence, but she had caught sight of him and imperiously signed to him to approach. She grasped his wrist, and with flashing eye repeated the Greek line—

‘Thou art not cause of my sorrow—but Agamemnon,’

referring, of course, to her uncle.

One evening she was required to attend a banquet in the palace. Sejanus, it was thought, or some attendant, out of malice, or to play on her suspicions, hinted that she was to be poisoned at the feast. Tiberius placed his mother and his niece next to himself at table. With lowering brow Agrippina passed every dish, and would neither eat nor speak. Then Tiberius took a rosy apple, praised its aroma, and handed it to Agrippina. With brow that darkened to deepest mistrust, and without speaking, Agrippina passed the apple over her shoulder to a servant, and bade him throw it away. Tiberius felt this as an affront, and more than that, a proclamation before all his guests of her mistrust. He, however, said nothing in reprimand, but, turning to his mother, observed: ‘Is it any wonder if I behave with severity to one who thus publicly brands me as a poisoner?’

This incident had the result that might have been anticipated. The rumour immediately circulated through Rome that Tiberius had sought the removal of Agrippina by poison, not daring to attack her openly.

The death of Drusus, whether Agrippina were privy to it or not, threw open to her a prospect that was likely to content the most ambitious woman. None stood between her sons and the throne, save the aged emperor, their uncle, and he had no thoughts of excluding them from the succession. He went out of his way to show favour to the youths, and let the senate and the people of Rome understand that he proposed to adopt them. Common prudence would have pointed out to Agrippina the advisability of burying her grievances and accepting frankly the open hand extended to her. But she had so completely assured herself that he had stained his soul with the murder of her beloved Germanicus, that she cast the counsels of prudence to the winds, and continued to maintain the same stubborn and defiant attitude as before.

The extravagant pretensions of Livia had caused a coolness between her son and herself. If Agrippina had exercised discretion she would

immediately have taken her place beside her uncle and directed his vacillating mind. In another generation the same situation was reproduced, and her daughter Agrippina acted in the manner most opposite to her mother. But instead of conciliating the placable old man, she threw down the glove, when she protested her desire to marry, and it was no secret that the man she had selected was that man, of all others, Tiberius most detested.

Her refusal to take the place offered her left the ground free for Sejanus. Concerning the conduct of this man we have but partial accounts. The secret history of the last years of Agrippina and of Tiberius was never revealed. We have the fragmentary narrative of Tacitus, and the account given by those who followed him, and who drew, like him, their account from the memoirs of the daughter of Agrippina; consequently they give but a one-sided view of his character and suppress every circumstance that tells against Agrippina. Not a word was there in the memoirs of the younger Agrippina of the intrigue and plot in which her mother was engaged; all that the daughter cared to show was intrigue and plot entered into against her.

As far as it is possible to discover, Sejanus, finding that, after the death of Drusus, Agrippina continued to pursue the same suicidal course, took his measures. The old prince had no one in his own family to stand by him, to help and to advise him. Sejanus therefore took possession of his ear and practised on the fears and hesitation of the failing man to serve his own ends. So much is certain.

Agrippina by her folly played into his hands. She had ill disguised her joy at the death of Drusus. She was impatient at the continuance of the reign of Tiberius. If she could have mastered her impatience and waited the course of events, then the fruit that the death of Drusus had produced, in the transformation of the position of her family, would have fallen to her of its own accord. But this patient waiting was precisely what she was incapable of enduring.

The emperor, true to his habit of seeking consolation or forgetfulness of his troubles in hard work, attended to the affairs of government with more energy than before the death of his son, and took every occasion to show his favour to the young princes. The eldest of these, the heir-presumptive to the throne, Nero, was brought by him into public life more and more. He was appointed in the senate to pronounce thanks to Tiberius for an act of special justice that the emperor had shown in bringing to punishment a governor in Asia who had grossly oppressed the province under him. As in the case of Caius Silius, Tiberius was resolved to put an end to this cruel plunder of the tributaries of Rome.

Prince Nero, in build, in voice, in face, was remarkably like his deceased father, Germanicus. This resemblance, together with a certain modesty of manner, won him the favour of the people, and the members of the aristocracy vied with each other in flattery to the heir of the throne.



This led to the first misunderstanding between Tiberius and his great-nephew. The pontifical colleges had inserted the names of Nero and Drusus in their prayers to the gods for the safety of the emperor, without asking the prince's consent. The thing was done out of adulation, as Tacitus admits, not out of real regard for the youths; and Tiberius was disconcerted by it. He thought it had been done by the interference of Agrippina, and he sent for the heads of the pontifical colleges to ascertain if it were so. They denied this, and he dismissed them with a light reprimand; but to the senate he spoke his mind plainly, 'that these young lads were not to have their heads turned by presumptuous aspirations and by premature distinctions accorded them.' The sequel proved that he was right. A whole party made a set to encourage the giddy youths in their pretences, and others, not belonging ostensibly to the party of Agrippina, thought it well to pay their homage to the rising sun. Augustus had acted in precisely the same manner, but what was laudable in him was regarded as blameworthy in Tiberius. This reprimand, which appears to us so sensible and advisable, was, according to Tacitus, merely an exhibition 'of the emperor's rooted animosity towards the house of Germanicus.'

Although the authorities followed by Tacitus have done their utmost to obscure the facts, yet it is unquestionable that, after the death of Drusus, instead of the union of the two parties being effected by a common interest, that of Agrippina held aloof and gathered strength. What Tacitus puts into the mouth of Sejanus was no more than the truth. 'The state is torn into two factions precisely as though it were in a condition of civil war, and one of these factions calls itself the party of Agrippina. It is high time,' urged Sejanus, 'that energetic action should be taken against certain of the heads of this party, so as to abate some of the mischief they are working.'

As Nero was heir-presumptive to the throne, he was the centre around whom all intrigue turned. It is quite certain that the party formed around him was impatient that he should hold the rudder of the state, and they resolved to hasten the day when this should take place. This Tacitus admits. He says, 'the freedmen and dependants of Nero, eager to acquire power, goaded him on to show an erect and confident spirit, assuring him that the Roman people desired his succession, as did also the army; nor, said they, would Sejanus dare to oppose him, though he now trampled equally on the imbecility of an old man and the supineness of a young one.' The prince was of an easy-going, unambitious nature—he was vain, however, and without brains. 'Whilst he listened to these suggestions, and such as these, though he exhibited no tokens of meditating mischief, yet every now and then he let slip intemperate and unadvised expressions, which were caught up by the spies set over him, and charged against him with aggravations.'

Tiberius began to show coolness towards him, and the court followed suit.

Drusus, the younger brother, was of a different temperament. He had much of the moroseness and bursts of violence that had characterised Agrippa Postumus. He was jealous of Nero, as his elder, 'and inflamed with envy because his mother, Agrippina, was fonder of Nero.' Tacitus speaks of his 'ungovernable spirit.' This he had inherited from his mother, and it was this hereditary vehemence which had manifested itself in insanity in Postumus, and was to break out in another form in his brother Caius Caligula.

One of the most dramatic and harrowing stories told by Tacitus is that of the fall and death of Titius Sabinus. In the pages of the historian, Sabinus is an innocent man, falsely accused, and unjustly brought to destruction. But he does not tell us the truth. He conceals the fact, revealed by Pliny the Elder, that he was engaged in a plot for the elevation of Nero to the throne. In this case, Tiberius acted with unusual energy; and, notwithstanding the sacred season, he acted with promptitude, and with disregard for the superstitious prejudices that surrounded the new year. The danger was imminent, and he arrested, tried, and condemned Sabinus in the sacred season. In a letter to the senate Tiberius revealed his reason for this prompt action. Sabinus had bribed some of the freedmen about the person of the emperor to assassinate him. In a letter of thanks to the senate after the condemnation of Sabinus, the prince declared 'that he lived a life of fear and of solicitude, being in constant apprehension of the plots of his adversaries.' He named no one, but none doubted that he referred to Agrippina and Nero.

Agrippina entirely miscalculated the forces ranged on her side. She was aware that throughout the oligarchical party there was general impatience against imperial rule, and she mistook this for impatience against Tiberius personally. All the discontented in Rome gravitated to her, and she lent a ready ear to their murmurs. It by no means followed that, because a whole class was out of humour, it was prepared to assist her in her ambitious schemes. The nobility sighed for their old independence and freedom from restraint, not for a change of dynasty or of the person who stood at the head of the state. As the horse said in the fable of Phædrus, 'What odds to me who sits on my back, if bear a saddle I must?'

The people would doubtless be pleased to have over them as emperor a son of Germanicus, about whom a myth had already formed, but they were not disposed to revolt for the sake of precipitating a change which must come in the order of nature within a very few years. The people, moreover, were never so well off as under Tiberius. The nobility, though they grumbled at Tiberius, were not as a body desirous of exchanging him for Nero, a weak creature, who would be completely

under the control of Agrippina; and with Agrippina, another Fulvia, at the head of affairs, there would ensue proscription and slaughter, and none could say where these would stop.

There were men ready for a change, men who had grown up since the civil wars, restless spirits, eager for revolution, hoping to pick their own advantage out of it, or men personally offended by Tiberius, and resolved at all price to destroy Sejanus, and thinking the sovereign could be struck only through his vizier. But with such spirits as these no successful conspiracy was ever carried through. In their number are certain to be found traitors. It was so in this case, and Agrippina had but her own shortsightedness and ambition to thank for what ensued.

#### VIII.—SEJANUS.

THE true motives that actuated the conflicting parties in Rome are not doubtful. One man, Sejanus, and the part he played, are, however, enveloped in mystery. We possess two accounts of Sejanus, one by Velleius Paterculus, who wrote before the fall of this A.U.C. 780.  
A.D. 27.  
Act. 68. prime minister, the other by Tacitus, who followed what the nobles had recorded against him, and what Agrippina the Younger had said of him in her memoirs. Velleius states: 'Tiberius Caesar has had, and still has, a most excellent coadjutor in all the toils of government,—a man remarkable for his fidelity in the discharge of his duties, and for ability to endure fatigue, the constitution of his body corresponding with the vigour of his mind; a man of pleasing gravity and of unaffected cheerfulness, appearing, in the despatch of business, perfectly at his ease; unassuming, but universally honoured, always deeming himself inferior to what others think of him; calm in looks and conversation, but in mind indefatigably vigilant.'

Then Velleius devotes an entire chapter to apologies for Tiberius raising a new man of no birth to a position so much above the old nobility, accustomed to engross to themselves all places of responsibility. This apology lets us suspect that a bitter resentment against this man of the people was felt, during the time of his power; a resentment which will explain the unqualified hideousness of the picture painted of him after his fall. 'Sejanus,' says Tacitus, 'was hardy, and equal to enduring any amount of fatigue; his spirit was daring; he was expert in disguising his own iniquities, prompt to spy out the failings of others; he was fawning to some, imperious to others; he assumed an exterior of modesty, but in his heart he lusted with insatiable greed after supreme power, and for the purpose of gaining his ends, he engaged sometimes in profusion, luxury, and liberality; but he more frequently attended to business, and to watching others, dangerous faculties in one aiming at the acquisition of empire.'

The story of his intrigues, his cruelties, in Tacitus, shows us a man

of the most repulsive, diabolical selfishness and unscrupulousness. It is impossible to accept this story as told, for it carries with it its own refutation. According to Tacitus, Sejanus was the deadly, remorseless enemy of Agrippina and her house, and Agrippina's energies were directed to protecting herself and her family from his machinations. But alongside this picture we have another. We are told that Sejanus was intimate with the brothers Nero and Drusus, and that he played off one against the other; he seduced not only Livilla, but also, it was asserted, attempted the seduction of Agrippina herself. It is not conceivable that, if he had been regarded as the mortal foe of the house, he would have been admitted to such intimacy with the members. The truth most probably was, that Sejanus, though ambitious, had no fixed plans at first, but formed them to suit each contingency that arose. He had to secure his future, which was menaced, and to this end he directed all his efforts, and seized every chance that presented itself, without scruple, and was ready to sacrifice any and every one who stood in his way.

When menaced by Drusus, son of Tiberius, the probable successor to the principate, he plotted with some of the party and family of Agrippina, if not with herself, the removal of the man who was a danger to himself, and who stood between the sons of Germanicus and the succession. Then, by his contrivance, and the connivance of the wife, Drusus was poisoned. Tiberius could not last many years; in the order of nature he must die, and it was of the highest importance to Sejanus to guarantee his own future and that of his children. This he would try to effect by courting the son of Agrippina, who was likely in a few years to be prince, and who would have his fortune in his hands. He knew that he was hated by the nobility, and that without a strong protector at the head of the state, he was lost. But there were two elements of difficulty to embarrass him. Nero, the eldest son of Agrippina, was amiable, inert, and brainless. In the next place, Drusus, the younger brother, was furiously jealous of his brother, and was plotting, on his own behalf, to wrest the succession to himself. To add to the complication, Agrippina was not the woman to keep counsel and act with discretion.

The lack of caution in Nero, perhaps the jealousy of Drusus, his brother, caused the intrigues formed for the advancement of the elder to reach the ears of Tiberius. Sejanus threw him over. With the savage, half-crazy Drusus nothing could be effected. Accordingly the vizier was forced in self-defence to aim at the principate for himself. Nothing would serve to advance this scheme better than his union with a daughter of the imperial house, and the removal of the male scions of that house. They, it was true, were doing their utmost to destroy themselves, and Sejanus had but to withdraw his hand from them, and they would plunge into destruction.



Livilla, the guilty widow of Drusus, son of Tiberius, and sister of Germanicus, was devoted to him, heart and soul. Livilla's daughter Julia was married to Nero, her first cousin. Sejanus now resolved to obtain the hand of the unhappy woman whom he had seduced and persuaded to poison her husband. He wrote a letter to his master to this effect. Tacitus has preserved for us the characteristic letter of Sejanus, and the not less characteristic reply of Tiberius.

Sejanus wrote, 'That he had been so habituated to the kindness of Augustus, and after that to the favour of Tiberius, that he had more confidence in making his petition to the princes than to the gods; that he had never sought for himself honours, but had devoted himself to painful watching and toil, like a common sentinel, guarding the person of his master. He had, it was true, attained an honour undeserved, alliance with the imperial house (a daughter of his was betrothed to Drusus, son of Claudius). Hence the foundation of his hopes. Augustus, when he disposed of his daughter, deigned to think of a common Roman knight; he therefore begged that if Tiberius designed to marry Livilla again, he would remember his friend, who sought no higher advantage than this alliance, for he desired no exemption from duties imposed on him, but held it sufficient that his house was fortified against the rancorous animosity of Agrippina. In seeking this marriage he consulted the security of his children. As for himself, all he cared for was that he might live long enough to serve his master during his life.'

In this letter Sejanus allows to escape him evidence of his real anxiety about the future, and his desire to protect himself against those who hated him." This request put Tiberius in a dilemma. He made answer in writing. After having praised the regard Sejanus had ever shown him, and referred slightly to the rewards he had given him for his services, he addressed himself to the main subject. 'Whilst other men,' said he, 'are allowed to consider their own advantage, it is incumbent on princes, in all matters of importance, to weigh well the general opinion of men. Accordingly, he would not resort to that answer readiest given. Let Livilla suit herself, and decide whether after Drusus she cared to marry again, or would bear her adverse fortune as heretofore under her father-in-law's roof,—or let her consult her mother and grandmother, advisers nearer than himself. No, he would act more straightforwardly, and point out to his friend the objections he saw to what was proposed. He must remind him that the wrath of Agrippina would infallibly break out more vehemently than heretofore, were the marriage of Livilla to become another occasion of severance in the imperial family. The rivalry of the women of his house would undermine the fortunes of his children. Sejanus,' he added, 'was deceived if he imagined that he could remain in his present modest rank, as he proposed; Livilla had

been wedded to Caius Caesar, and then to Drusus; she would never endure to end her days as the good woman of a common knight. Could the emperor himself permit it? Did he think that the Roman people would endure it?—a people who had witnessed her brother, her father, and their noble ancestors all crowned successively with the highest honours of the state. It was true that Augustus had for a moment contemplated the union of his daughter with the knight Proculius, yet to whom did he actually espouse her? First to the illustrious Agrippa, and then, secondly, to himself, Tiberius,—to the man, in short, whom he had destined to be his successor.’

This wise and kindly letter is remarkable, for it shows us that Tiberius had penetration to see to what such a marriage must lead, and yet had not sufficient discernment to detect that it was precisely for that reason that Sejanus sought it. There is something peculiarly sad in reading this letter, and knowing that the man who penned it with such forbearance was betrayed by him to whom he wrote—the murderer of his son. Tiberius sought to restore harmony between the branches of the imperial house. His mother, who, in irritable old age, had fomented the quarrel, was now rapidly failing. With the certainty of the succession for Nero, Agrippina might surely relax her frown, and if she would not be friendly, might remain indifferent. Tiberius saw that the marriage of the widow of his son to his minister would inflame all the old sores, and that the elevation of Sejanus into such alliance with himself must carry Sejanus further than Tiberius believed his minister designed. He would therefore not suffer his friend, whom he trusted and loved, to be placed in a position in which, for his own preservation, he would have to make a party opposed to that of Agrippina and Nero.

Sejanus at once saw that he had gone too far. He was disappointed, and mortified, but not disposed to abandon his ambitious designs. The hand of Livilla he was resolved to obtain eventually, to give him some sort of claim to the throne, but he must clear away before him those who stood in his road. The blind hate and impatience of Agrippina precipitated her into a course that furnished Sejanus with what he desired,—material for the accusation of her sons as conspirators against the life of their great-uncle.

Sejanus replied to the letter of Tiberius by conjuring him ‘not to lend an ear to suggestions of suspicion, the pratings of the vulgar, and the assaults of envy.’ He knew that his request and rebuff would be the talk of Rome, and that his personal enemies would take advantage of the occasion to strew mistrust between his imperial master and himself. And so it was. His house was at once crowded with visitors to express their regret at his disappointment, and to watch for a word or a sign that might enable them to found an accusation against him. He would gladly have closed his doors against these disguised

enemies, but did not dare to do so. Fortunately for him, at this very time Tiberius resolved to carry out a long meditated design of retirement into Campania. If the emperor were no longer in Rome, but in his country villa, then Sejanus 'saw that many advantages would accrue to himself. Upon him would depend access to the emperor; the letters would be almost wholly under his supervision, as the praetorian soldiers were the carriers, and he was their commanding officer. In a little while the prince, now declining in years, and enervated by retirement, would gradually transfer to him the whole charge of the imperial government; the animosity felt towards him would abate when he was able to get rid of the crowd of visitors, and shake off the empty parade of power, at the very moment when he laid his grasp on that which was essential. Sejanus, therefore, began to rail at the whirl of business at Rome, the throng of people, the conflux of suitors, applauding "quiet and retirement, which afford the greatest facilities for deliberation on important matters, the mind not being distracted by importunities, and not exposed to annoyance from the dissatisfied."'

A state trial that came before the senate struck the rivet in the resolution of Tiberius. Votienus Montanus was a wit, and belonged to the party of the dissatisfied. He was accused of treason, and Tiberius sat in the senate during the trial. One of the witnesses against Votienus was a soldier, Aemilius, and with soldierly frankness he repeated all the scurrilous words he had heard spoken against Tiberius, without softening them in the least. Many of those present raised a clamour to drown his voice, but Aemilius persisted, and Tiberius writhed in torture. He had suddenly disclosed to him the foul and malignant slander with which 'society' besmirched his character. Unable to endure the shame and agony, he burst forth into a cry that 'he would at once clear himself of such calumnies, and have everything judicially sifted.' His friends and attendants had the utmost difficulty in appeasing his excited mind, and dissuading him from attempting the impossible, the tracking home of a slander.

Till the year in which his son Drusus had died, Tiberius had hardly quitted Rome. For two whole years after he became prince he never even set his foot outside the gates; and after that he allowed himself but short periods of relaxation from work, and never went further than Antium, there to inhale the fresh air from the sea, and he never remained there for more than a few days. Yet he felt a craving for country air and rest, and so often spoke of his intention of taking a holiday that the Romans in joke called him a Callipides 'always on the run, but never advancing a step.' Wearied with the burden of government, no longer animated with the thought that he was working to consolidate the empire for his son, knowing that his successor was inspired by the party about him with dislike towards himself, and that

minds were poisoned against him, sick at heart over the revelation of the falsehoods circulated relative to his private life, and looking back with yearning to the restful period in Rhodes, he suddenly turned his back on Rome and went into Campania, on the plea that he must dedicate a couple of temples there, one of which was at Nola, where Augustus had died.

Rome was the pandemonium of all passions and crimes, and he hated it. He would be alone with his sorrows, as he had been before, at Rhodes. He longed to be far from the irritations caused by brushes with Agrippina and by the extravagant demands of Livia. In solitude he hoped to be able better to carry on the task of government.

He had proposed to himself this retirement from Rome three years before, but with his usual procrastination had put off the decisive move till, through the revelations of the trial of Votienus, the atmosphere became to him infected, and he could no longer endure to breathe it. Moreover, his health was breaking down. 'His tall emaciated form was bent, his head was bald, his face ulcerous, and thickly patched with plasters.' Naturally the rancorous tongues in Rome had it that he ran away to hide the baldness of his head and the sores on his face, because he was vain of his beauty. The Romans could not understand the old man's hunger after rest, and shuddering disgust at the taint of the society of the capital. Roman society could not understand that any man could live and find contentment away from 'town.' And when it discovered that mortified vanity at having a blotched face did not suffice to explain the retreat of the emperor, it said that he had gone into Campania to indulge freely in 'cruelty and lust.' Not a single instance of either is recorded against Tiberius during all the years when he lived in the glare of full publicity in Rome, that is to say, during the twelve years he was with Augustus, as his assistant, and during the thirteen years that he had reigned. For twenty-four years—from the age of forty-four till he was sixty-eight—he had lived in the midst of a scandal-loving people, eager to discover a blemish in the life of a ruler, and nothing had been found in him that could furnish a paragraph in the *chronique scandaleuse*. But now that he was gone, accompanied as before, when he went to Rhodes, by a few learned men, the fervid and foul mind of Rome set to work to invent every loathsome detail that imagination could create, and to circulate it as the record of the doings of the old man in his solitary retreat.

Tiberius took few with him: one senator of consular rank, Cocceius Nerva, the greatest lawyer in Rome, as his minister of justice; of Roman knights and men of senatorial rank, he took one only beside Sejanus—this was Curtius Atticus, a friend of Ovid, afterwards ruined by Sejanus. All the rest were literary and learned men, mostly Greeks, in whose society Tiberius found relaxation and pleasure. His devoted servant, Lucius Piso, praefect of the city, a man whose excellence even Tacitus admits,



‘one who was never the spontaneous author of any servile motion, one ever wise in moderating such when necessity forced his assent,’—this man was left in Rome with secret instructions, and invested with the fullest power as minister of police.

Hardly had the prince quitted the capital before the news reached it of an accident that might have cost him his life, and the news filled the Roman public with the most contrary feelings. Tiberius had gone with his retinue to Spelunca, the present Spelungo, where he had a villa. The weather was hot, and a meal was prepared for him in the cave from which the place takes its name. Then suddenly a mass of stone fell from the vault and buried some of the attendants. In the panic that ensued every one who could scrambled out, but Sejanus promptly threw himself across the body of his master to ward off from him the still falling stones. In this position he was found, and disinterred by the guard, who hastened to the spot to render assistance. Tiberius was touched by this token of devotion in his friend, and his conviction of the sincerity of the attachment of Sejanus and his fidelity was deepened.

From Spelunca Tiberius pursued his way through Campania, and visited Capua and Nola for the dedication of the temples there. But the rush of people to see him, to press on him their petitions, the ceremonial, the banquets, were tedious to him. Before he left Rome he had issued an order forbidding his subjects to incommode him with demands for audiences; but the guards who attended him were unable to restrain the crowds who pressed on him, some out of curiosity, others to obtain favours. At last he was able to escape, and to cross the bay of Naples to the islet where he had resolved to spend the last years of life that remained to him.

Capreae was the private property of the imperial house. Augustus had obtained it from the Neapolitans by exchange for Aenaria. It had been in his time barren, overrun by goats. The precipitous cliffs made it unsuitable as an abode for fishermen. Augustus had laid the foundations there of a villa, to be his ‘Apragopolis,’—his Sanssouci, but he had never spent there more than a few days. Tiberius had for some time been preparing for his retirement. He had had twelve summer-houses erected on the points commanding the fairest views, and had ordered the villa of Augustus to be enlarged and furnished for his requirements. It stood, in all probability, on the spot now pointed out by the inhabitants as the Palazzo del Timberio, where are some ruins.

The island was as though constituted by nature to be a resting-place for a lord of the world, with mind clouded by painful experiences, who desired to withdraw from the public eye, and yet had no intention of allowing the reins of government to be taken out of his hands. It is accessible at one point only, easily secured; everywhere else its limestone cliffs start sheer out of the blue sea to a height of a thousand feet.

This gave the old emperor security against attack. Moreover, the station of the fleet was at Misenum, two hours distant, and it was separated from Surrentum, on the Campanian coast, by a channel six miles wide. 'While few other spots could have combined the requisites of solitude and difficult approach with such actual proximity to the seat of government, Tiberius was not insensible to the charms of its climate, and even the attractions of its scenery; to the freshness of its evening breeze, the coolness of its summers, and the pleasing mildness of its winters. The villas he erected enjoyed every variety of prospect, commanded every breath of air, and caught the rays of the sun at every point of his diurnal progress. From the heights of Capreae the eye comprehended at one glance the whole range of the Italian coast from the promontory of Circe to the temples of Paestum, clearly visible through the transparent atmosphere. The Falerian and Gauran ridges, teeming with the noblest vineyards of Italy, the long ridges of the Samnite Apennines, even to the distant Lucanian mountains, formed the framework of the picture, while Vesuvius reared its then level crest, yet unscarred by lava, directly in the centre. Facing the south, the spectator gazed on the expanse of the Sicilian sea. So wide is the horizon that it is, perhaps, no fiction that at some favourable moments the outlines of the fiery isles of Aeolus, and even of Sicily itself, are within the range of vision. The legends of Circe and Ulysses, of Cimmerian darkness and Phlegraean fires, of the wars of the Giants with Jupiter, and the graceful omens which attracted the first settlers to these shores from Greece, had perhaps a strange fascination for the worn-out soldier and politician. Reclining on the slopes of Capreae, and gazing on the glorious landscape before him, Tiberius might dream of a fairyland of the poet's creation, and seek some moments of repose from the hard realities of his eternal task, to perplex his attendants with insoluble questions on the subjects of the sirens' song and the name of Hecuba's mother. . . . The great Italian volcano had slumbered since the dawn of history. Tokens, indeed, were not wanting on the surface of the fires still seething beneath the plains of Campania; the sulphureous exhalations of Baiae and Puteoli still attested the truth of legends of more violent igneous action on which the local mythology was built. But even these legends pointed to no eruption of Vesuvius; no cone of ashes rose then as now from its bosom, and cities and villages clustered at its foot or hung upon its flanks, unconscious of the elements of convulsion hushed in grim repose beside them.'<sup>1</sup>

#### IX.—THE END OF NERO.

SEJANUS had failed in his first move. He had been refused the widow Livilla, and yet Tiberius, with that hesitation that accompanied

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, v. 347-8.

all he did, held out hopes to his favourite that his opposition might ultimately yield. Perhaps after the incident in the cave his gratitude towards the man who, at the risk of his own life, had sheltered him, induced him to grant what he had previously refused; for we certainly find after this that Sejanus was betrothed to the princess. If up to



FIG. 73.—NERO, son of Germanicus. Profile and Head of the statue in the Lateran; found at Cervetri.<sup>1</sup>

this time he had doubted whether he should proceed to thrust the princes Nero and Drusus out of his way, he doubted now no longer.

Tiberius had not been many months in Capreae before he heard of the conspiracy of Titius Sabinus to obtain his assassination, in favour of the young prince Nero. In the following year he was informed of

<sup>1</sup> The statue in harness in the Lateran, of which Fig. 73 is the profile of the head, was found at Cervetri. It cannot be determined with certainty, but it is certainly a Claudian. Bernoulli is inclined to believe it to be the unfortunate son of Germanicus and Agrippina; so am I. There is in it a likeness on the one side to the portraits of his father, and in the brow there is a touch of the heaviness of his mother and his grandfather, Agrippa.

another conspiracy. Sabinus and those in immediate league with him had been punished, but no proceedings had been taken against Agrippina and her sons, in favour of whom all the intrigues and plots were formed, even if they were not themselves the main instigators. Possibly there was not in the hands of Tiberius sufficient evidence of their complicity; probably he desired to caution them, and to avoid taking a decided step against his own blood-relatives, unless absolutely forced to do so.

But his forbearance encouraged their audacity, and his absence from Rome gave them hopes that a sudden rising of the people might sweep Nero into the place which Tiberius, by his retirement, seemed to have vacated.

Asinius Gallus was the man who had married Vipsania, the divorced wife of Tiberius, and Vipsania was the half-sister of Agrippina. As we have seen, Agrippina, who was aunt of the children of Asinius, desired to be united to him in marriage. After the condemnation of Sabinus, when the prince had by letter complained that his life was menaced by assassins secretly engaged among those nearest him, this man boldly moved 'that the emperor should be desired to explain his fears to the senate, so that they might provide for their removal.' In other words, he challenged Tiberius to name Agrippina and her sons, hoping that by so doing the provocation for a general rising might be given. Tiberius was greatly irritated by this motion, but he made no reply.

Hitherto he had shown only kindness to the house of Germanicus. Nero was his acknowledged heir and successor, and neither Agrippina nor the younger brother Drusus had any grounds of complaint against the emperor, who now, in further token of interest in the family, married Agrippina, the eldest daughter, then aged thirteen, to Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, the representative of one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most distinguished families in Rome. Cn. Domitius was the son of Lucius Domitius and Antonia, daughter of Marcus Antonius the triumvir and of Octavia, the sister of Augustus.

'The Fifth Book' (of Tacitus), says Mr. Furneaux, 'opens with the death of Augusta (Livia), who, after having been charged, by hints more or less explicit, with every death in the house of the Caesars, is now represented no longer as the "terrible stepmother," but as the sole remaining protection of the family supposed to have been most obnoxious to her. In another place such discrepancies are loosely accommodated by saying that she ostentatiously supported in adversity those whom she had secretly undermined in their prosperity. The verdict of historical criticism has generally acquitted her of these imputations, and regarded her throughout the long and unbroken period of her ascendancy as a softening and moderating influence on the cruel (?) propensities of her husband and her son. And indeed, whatever her personal feeling towards the house of Germanicus, we may suppose her sufficiently



imbued with the policy of Augustus to see that her son had far more to gain than to lose by surrounding himself with family support, and that it would not be desirable for him, at the age of seventy, to be left with no heir but his grandson Tiberius Gemellus, a boy of ten years old.<sup>1</sup>

Before taking leave of Livia, a story may be told concerning her, related by Pliny. He says that when engaged to be married to Octavius, one day a white hen flew to her for protection from an eagle, and when she took it to her bosom she found it had a laurel twig in its beak, on which hung some berries. These berries she planted, and a



FIG. 74.—LIVIA. Profile of the Statue found at Paestum, now in Madrid.

laurel shrubbery sprang up. It thenceforth became customary for Augustus and the succeeding princes, when celebrating their triumphs, to bear in hand a bough of laurel from this grove of laurels at the villa, thenceforth called 'ad Gallinas.' It became also a custom to plant each bough borne by an emperor at his triumph. In Pliny's time each laurel bush that thus originated was pointed out. Suetonius, half a century later, tells the same story, with modifications of his own.

Tiberius was not present when Livia died, nor did he return to Rome for her funeral.

Livia had been ill six years before, and fears for her life were then entertained. On this occasion Tiberius had at once hastened to her bedside. The senate had expressed its sympathy, and on her recovering had decreed sacrifices. Tiberius, with his sober sense, checked the extravagance of adulation then shown. When the

A. U. C. 782.  
A. D. 29.  
Æt. 70.

<sup>1</sup> Furneaux, *Annals of Tacitus*, i. p. 127.

ambassadors of Further Spain besought the senate to allow them to erect a temple to the divinity of Tiberius and Livia, 'the prince, always resolute in despising honours,' peremptorily refused the permission solicited. 'I know, conscript fathers,' said he, 'that it was owing to weakness that I yielded lately, when the cities of Asia preferred the same request. I wish now, once for all, to state my views on this matter. The deified Augustus allowed the erection of a temple to himself at Pergamus, and, as I have been accustomed to look to him as an example, I suffered the same thing to be done. But I hope this one instance will be excused. I do not wish the same thing to be done in every province, for such would manifest in me a spirit of vanity and a heart inflated with ambition. If the homage paid to Augustus be made a pattern on which I and others are to be adored, indiscriminately and undeservedly, then the worship of Augustus will fade into forgetfulness. For myself, I am a mere mortal man, and enough for me if I do my duties as such; I am content if posterity recognises that.' I solemnly assure you I desire nothing further than that this homage be rendered to my memory, that I have been worthy of my ancestry, watchful of your interests, unmoved by peril in the pursuit of public welfare, and fearless of my private enemies. This is all the temple I desire to have raised to me—and that in your hearts. These are my best monuments, and such will endure. As for those of stone, if posterity judges ill of the man to whom they were erected, they are despised like sepulchres. I therefore pray the gods to give me an unruffled spirit to the end of my days, and a discerning mind to distinguish between what appertains to a man and what to a god. And, finally, whenever my death comes, I pray you to celebrate my actions, and what fragrance attaches to my name, with praise and kindly tokens of remembrance.' 'Thenceforth,' says Tacitus, 'he persevered in discouraging on all occasions, and in private conversation, this worship of himself; a conduct by some attributed to modesty, by many to mistrust of his own merit; by others to degeneracy of spirit.'

The shrinking from public exhibitions which Tiberius felt held him back from attending the funeral of Livia in Rome; moreover, his health was bad. He prepared for the journey, but postponed it till too late, unable to resolve from day to day whether to undertake the journey or not. Again the senate broke forth into adulation so gross that Tiberius was obliged once more to interfere. The senate was for canonising Livia; Tiberius objected: 'let no religious worship be given to her; she herself did not wish that it should.'

Livia had been, according to Tacitus's own account, the mortal enemy of Agrippina and her house. And yet he tells us that the death of Livia removed the only barrier that withheld Tiberius from proceeding to extremities against Agrippina. It is not possible to make all the statements of Tacitus rhyme. If we accept the colours he puts

on his account, we are landed in difficulties ; if, however, we give a different interpretation to the facts he records, a consistent story results that puts Tiberius in an altogether different light from that in which he desires to present him.

‘Soon after the death of Augusta,’ says Tacitus, ‘imperial letters reached the senate against Agrippina and Nero,—but people believed these had been despatched long before, but had been suppressed by Livia. They contained expressions of refined barbarity ; not imputing acts of armed hostility or designs of treason, but the prince



FIG. 75.—AGRIPPINA MAJOR. Bust in the Chigi Palace, Rome (after Bernoulli).<sup>1</sup>

charged his grandson with gross dissoluteness, and Agrippina with haughtiness and a turbulent spirit.’

It is quite inconceivable that the historian can have believed that the correspondence of Tiberius with the senate passed through the hands of Livia, from whom the emperor was estranged because she attempted to interfere in appointments to offices. Tacitus has told us this ; he has done more : he has accentuated the quarrel, so as to make us believe that Tiberius hated his mother—and yet he suggests that the

<sup>1</sup> This Chigi bust differs somewhat in chin and arch of brow from that in the Chiaramonti gallery (Figs. 72 and 79), but agrees better with Fig. 68. However, an outline does not do real justice to the Chigi bust, and the resemblance is much closer to the first of the Chiaramonti busts, that appears in the engraving.

prince allowed her to use her judgment respecting his letters to the senate, and to suppress those of which she did not approve!

That Sejanus was working on the mind of the old man, rousing his fears, we need not doubt, nor that Agrippina and her sons gave him good cause to be vigilant against their designs. But he was slow to take extreme steps against them, and he issued this warning to induce them to be cautious. Nero was undermining his health by his debauchery, as well as making his wife unhappy. Undoubtedly Tiberius had remonstrated privately with the young man, and as private remonstrance failed, he trusted that a solemn appeal from the senate would induce him to mend his ways. But the cautiously worded letter implied more than was said. It was intended to let Nero understand that his great-uncle was kept well informed as to what he did. If the prince heard of his dissolute morals, he heard also of the young man's treasonable correspondence.

The letter of Tiberius 'produced great consternation in the senate, which remained speechless, and presently a few who had no hopes of pushing their way by favour, moved the previous question. The foremost in zeal was Cotta Messalinus, who expressed himself in terms of extreme severity; but the other leading men, and chiefly the magistrates, were greatly embarrassed, for Tiberius, whilst inveighing bitterly against Agrippina and Nero, had left everything very vague.'

The reason of this embarrassment was not far to seek. The senators were afraid to take any step against Nero, who might succeed to the throne any day, and would remember against them any action to his disadvantage.

It is to be regretted that Tacitus did not give us the text of the letter of Tiberius. Had he done so, we might have better understood the incident. But it is plain that Agrippina and her party were prepared for it, and had organised a demonstration. Whilst the senate was consulting, a tumult was heard, and the Curia in which it sat was surrounded by a mob carrying the statues and busts of Agrippina and her children, raising loud shouts, exclaiming that the letter was a forgery, was due to Sejanus, and was sent by him without the knowledge of the emperor, so as to effect the destruction of the house of Germanicus.

The senate, already in hesitation how to proceed, was cowed effectually, and reverted to the order of the day. This was a manifest slight put on the emperor. Moreover, the outbreak of popular feeling showed Tiberius that Agrippina and her party were determined to appeal to force against him. It was said that she and Nero were about to fly to the Rhine and place themselves at the head of the legions there quartered. Those in Gaul were likewise supposed to be well affected towards the wife and son of Germanicus. Revolutionary harangues were posted up in the streets; and, if we may trust the words of Tiberius himself, 'seditious bills were carried through in the



senate, and nothing remained but recourse to arms and the choice of generals and leaders.' At the same time, in order the further to excite the populace, forged speeches of Sejanus against Agrippina and her sons were circulated broadcast among the people. Tiberius wrote again to the senate, complaining of its conduct, and a proclamation was issued to the people rebuking them for the recent exhibition of violence.

At this point we are deprived of the guidance of Tacitus. All the chapters in his *Annals* comprising a period of three years (A.D. 29-30, and the greater part of 31) have been lost, years in which occurred some of the most important events of the reign of Tiberius; such as the imprisonment of Agrippina and her two sons, with the death of the elder; the execution of Sejanus, and the death of Livilla, his accomplice. We are driven, therefore, for the story of this period to other authorities less full, and even less trustworthy. This we know, that the trial of Agrippina and her two sons was removed from the senate to a court over which sat Lucius Piso, a magistrate of the highest integrity, as Tacitus himself allows. The prosecutor was, apparently, Vescularius Flaccus, a man highly esteemed by Tiberius, and one of his councillors.

No particulars relative to the trial have come down to us. All we know is the effect produced on the mind of Tiberius by the revelations there made. Velleius says: 'With what violent grief has his mind been tortured during the last three years! How long has his heart been consumed with affliction, and, saddest of all, with such as he was obliged to disguise, and whilst compelled to grieve, he felt indignation and shame at the conduct of his daughter-in-law (Agrippina) and his grandson (Nero); moreover, the sorrows of this period have been aggravated by the loss of his most excellent mother, a woman resembling the gods rather than human beings; and whose power no man ever felt but in the relief of distress or in the conferring of honour.'

The condemnation of Agrippina and Nero took place first; later followed that of Drusus. Nero was sent to one of the Ponza isles, where he starved himself to death, to escape execution by the hand of a common gaoler, which he believed was meditated. Drusus had been brought to Capreae before Tiberius himself, and was sent thence under guard to Rome, where he was confined in the subterranean prisons of the palace. These prisons remain, and are about all that do remain of the palace of Tiberius on the Palatine. They consist of a series of cells, with a gallery communicating with them by doors. They obtained light through the windows in this gallery; some of them were apparently provided with heating apparatus. Before the gallery was a platform for exercise, commanding a view of the Aventine and the Janiculan Hills and the Capitol. The prospect was fairly extensive, reaching to where rose then the tower of Maecenas on the Esquiline heights. This

platform is immediately over the Lupercal and the church of S. Theodore. Here Drusus remained till after the fall of Sejanus.

This infamous man, so runs the story of Tacitus, had succeeded in entangling Drusus in his meshes. Tiberius had lately married Drusus to the daughter of Aemilius Lepidus, a worthy man, towards whom the emperor entertained a warm attachment. But Sejanus succeeded in seducing the young wife, and she betrayed her husband's reckless schemes to her seducer. Tiberius wished to spare him, but it was necessary for the ambitious plans of Sejanus that he should perish. Drusus was accused of high treason before the senate, and condemned capitally; but the sentence was commuted by Tiberius into imprisonment. At the same time that Agrippina and Nero were impeached, a charge of high treason was brought against Asinius Gallus, who, there can be little doubt, was involved in whatever plot was ripening to execution. His life also was spared by the emperor, and his sentence reduced to imprisonment. He remained for three years in confinement, and finally starved himself to death.

At this point we may be allowed to consider the value of the testimony of Tacitus relative to the character of Tiberius. His testimony has been of late seriously impugned.<sup>1</sup>

Tacitus was certainly strongly prejudiced against Tiberius. He himself was, in all probability, a *novus homo*; his cognomen indicates a servile origin of his family, if not of himself. Like Cicero, having risen to belong to the aristocracy, he threw himself wholly into the feelings and interests of that party, and his *Annals* are written as history was seen through the eyes of a depressed nobility.

Moreover, he was present during the reign of terror in Rome, during the last three years of Domitian, when delatorship reached its height, and he viewed with intense bitterness that emperor under whom delatorship was thought to have risen to be a means for the decimation of the aristocracy. But for the autocracy of the Caesars, all power would have been in the hands of the nobility. *That* the class could not forget, and consequently hated the principate.

'With all allowance for the sincerity of his disclaimer,' says Mr. Furneaux, 'special grounds of animosity (in Tacitus) against Tiberius appear discernible. He had seen in his own day "the extremity of slavery, when even the interchange of speech and hearing was destroyed by espionage." He traces back this systematic delation to its source, and, as it were, charges this prince with its full-developed iniquity. . . . It would be natural that the memory of the tyrant under whom the

<sup>1</sup> Notably by Sievers, *Tacitus und Tiberius*, 1851; L. Freitag, *Tiberius und Tacitus*, 1870; A. Stahr, *Tiberius*, 2nd ed. 1872; Professor Beesley, *Catiline, Clodius and Tiberius*, 1878. This last I have purposely not read, as we go over the same ground, and hold the same opinion with regard to Tiberius. Duruy in his *History* gives modified praise; Mr. Furneaux is on the whole unfavourable, but admits the exaggeration of Tacitus.

historian lived should enter into the portrait of that predecessor in whose private memoirs he was said to find his chief mine of political wisdom.' Moreover, Tacitus used the Memoirs of Agrippina the Younger, written with a pen steeped in deadly animosity against the man she had been taught from earliest infancy to regard as the foe of her house.

The *animus* of the historian is conspicuous enough in the manner in which he catches up rumours and asserts them as facts, and insinuates evil where he has not the evidence to prove it.<sup>1</sup>

Tacitus, at the end of his Sixth Book, gives us his judgment on the life and character of Tiberius, and, according to him, it was marked out into five epochs of gradual deterioration.

1. 'His conduct was exemplary, and his reputation high, as long as he was in a private capacity and holding dignities under Augustus'—*i.e.* B.C. 41—A.D. 14; the first fifty-five years.

2. 'Whilst Germanicus and Drusus were alive, his manners were reserved and mysterious, artfully assuming the merit of virtues to which he had no claim'—A.D. 14-22; from 55 years old to the age of 63.

3. 'While his mother lived his character exhibited a compound of good and of evil.'—A.D. 23-28; till the age of 69.

4. 'While he loved or feared Sejanus, though detested for his cruelties, he observed a secrecy and caution in the gratification of his lusts'—A.D. 29-31; till the age of 72.

5. 'At last, when all restraints of shame and fear were removed, and he was left to the uncontrolled bent of his genius, he broke out at once into acts of atrocious villainy and revolting depravity'—A.D. 31-37; till the age of 78.

According to this representation, the life of Tiberius up to the age of *seventy-two* was one of dissimulation, and only in the last *six* years of his life, when he was, in fact, broken down in health, did the true man appear! A very few words are needed to point out how preposterous is this estimate.

Tiberius was in his fifty-sixth year when he became emperor. Then, in the fulness of sovereign power, at an age when the faculty for enjoyment of life is fading away, but in which infirmities begin to manifest themselves, and the approach of old age warns a man that if he is to drink the cup of pleasure he must quaff it at once, Tiberius masks his passions for another period of sixteen years! 'I believe,' says Dr. Wiedemeister, 'such a conception of character could only have been hatched out of the head of a schoolmaster!'<sup>2</sup>

Tacitus says: 'From his infancy his life was chequered by various vicissitudes and dangers. At first as a child he followed his proscribed father into voluntary banishment; then, when taken into the family of Augustus, he had to contend with many rivals, whilst Marcellus and

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. *Tacitus and Tiberius*.

<sup>2</sup> Wiedemeister, *Caesaren Wahnsinn*; Hannover, 1875.

Agrippa, and after them Caius Caesar and Lucius, were in favour. His brother Drusus also enjoyed greater popularity with the Romans than himself. But his greatest embarrassment arose out of his marriage with Julia, having to decide whether to connive at her prostitution or to repudiate her. Afterwards, on his return from Rhodes, he found the prince's family bereft of heirs, and continued its sole support for twelve years. For nearly four-and-twenty years he ruled the Roman state with absolute sway. His manners also varied with his conditions of fortune.' Then follows the discrimination of his career into the five epochs, as already given.

According to Tacitus, Tiberius was a man of dissimulation till he was seventy-two, and then only for six years did his true character, libidinous and savage, break out. For seventy-two years all the tokens of honour, of modesty, of self-control, of rectitude, that were observed in him, conspicuous to all, were a mask assumed to hide the hideousness of the true man. 'Verily!' exclaims Adolf Stahr, 'such a life is not to be found repeated in the history of mankind. It is not to be found, for such a phenomenon is a psychological impossibility. This far-famed delineation of the character of Tiberius carries its own refutation with it, and fortunately this refutation is supplied by history itself. If by this the authority of Tacitus, and blind respect for his impartiality and psychological insight, be somewhat undermined, it is no great misfortune, for they have served long enough to obscure the eyes of mankind and to falsify the character of one of the most unhappy and yet most remarkable of men.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Furneaux says: 'The circumstances (of his early life), acting on such a temperament, produced much such a character as we should expect. We are to think of the man Tiberius as one naturally austere, reserved, and distant; the best of whose life had been spent in camps or in retirement; whose position at court had been generally more or less overshadowed by rivals, and whose domestic life had been wrecked for political objects in which he had no primary interest; while he had been schooled for years in repression. . . . He had lived in the coldest shade of neglect as well as in the full sunshine of flattery, and could rate the homage of senate and people at its proper worth. Of all views of his character, none is more amply borne out by facts than that which states that his resolution was as weak as his penetration was keen<sup>2</sup>; so that the more clearly he could read men's minds, the more he was at a loss to deal with them. It is in this mixture of strength and weakness, as well as in the union of his natural self-distrust, reserve, and austerity, with the souring experiences of a lifetime, that we find the leading traits of character of the future ruler.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stahr, *Tiberius*, p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> This is precisely what his head tells us—broad above, and narrowing to a point in the chin.

<sup>3</sup> Furneaux, *Annals of Tacitus*, i. p. 117.



## X.—THE FALL OF SEJANUS.

SEJANUS might flatter himself that he had but to put forth his hand to pluck the fruit which he had laboured to gain. The Empress Livia was no more; the Julian house was desolate. His enemies and opponents—Drusus, the son of the emperor, Agrippina and her sons Nero and Drusus—were swept aside. The only representative of the Julian house as yet untouched was Caius (Caligula), Agrippina's youngest son, then living under the care of his grandmother, Antonia, and of the Claudian house was Tiberius Gemellus, the grandson of Tiberius, but he was a mere child.

A.U.C. 784.  
A.D. 31.  
Act. 72.

The senate lavished honours on the favourite of the emperor; coins were struck in Spain bearing his effigy beside that of Tiberius. An altar was erected to Friendship, with the representations of Tiberius and Sejanus on it. As neither the emperor nor his minister came to Rome, the senators, the knights, all solicitous of obtaining favours, crowded to Campania to obtain interviews with Sejanus, who was harder of access than his master. This augmented his arrogance. As long as Sejanus remained in the presence of the prince at Capreae, it was impossible for any one to open the eyes of Tiberius to the treachery of his favourite minister, for he controlled every avenue by which access could be had to his master. All the correspondence passed through his hands. But the conditions were altered when Sejanus went to Rome, sent there by Tiberius, but for what reasons, we do not know. A late authority, perhaps for the purpose of drawing a lively picture, describes the parting. 'The emperor embraced and kissed him, weeping, and exclaimed that he felt as though he were losing a part of himself.'<sup>1</sup>

As yet no suspicion that Sejanus could be unfaithful had entered the mind of Tiberius; if there had, he would not have sent him to Rome, where he commanded the praetorian guard.

On reaching the capital, the great vizier was received with abject respect. His busts and portraits were everywhere exhibited side by side with those of the emperor, and like sacrifices were offered before both. Men swore by the 'lucky star of Sejanus,' as they did by that of Tiberius. Two golden seats were placed side by side in the theatre, one for the sovereign, the other for his minister. A decree of the senate invested both with the consulship for five years, and required all future consuls to model their conduct on that of Sejanus. Already, in the society of the nobility, Tiberius was spoken of as 'The King of the Isle,' and Sejanus as his 'Tutor.' Crowds assembled before the palace of the favourite, elbowing themselves into prominence, fearful of not being noticed, or of being noticed too late. It flattered the son of the Vulsinian knight to see the proud nobles cringe before him, and he

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cassius, fragm. Vat.

observed their countenances attentively. Dio Cassius says truly enough : 'Men born to honour do not set such store on outward demonstrations of respect, and do not resent lack of respect towards their persons so keenly as do new men, because the former know well that their worth is properly appreciated by others. He, however, who struts in borrowed plumes lays the greatest stress on outward demonstrations, and holds as a galling slight any carelessness or neglect in the attribution of honour. Consequently people are more on their guard to show honour to new men than to aristocrats by birth, for these latter consider it rather becoming in them to disregard an act of discourtesy, whereas the former consider such as a challenge, to be resented with all their might.'<sup>1</sup>

If the enemies of Sejanus purposed to excite the jealousy of the prince by their exaggerated homage, they gained in part their object. The emperor, who addressed him as his 'companion in the labours of government,' repeated his former order forbidding divine honours to be paid to himself or any other man. But Tiberius did not mistrust the minister, he was vexed at the baseness of the Roman nobility. He had nominated Sejanus as consul for the ensuing year, and had finally yielded to his persuasion, and consented to his betrothal to the princess Julia.<sup>2</sup>

'If a god had declared how sudden and complete would be the transformation of affairs at this time,' says Dio Cassius, 'no one would have believed him.'

On the last New Year's Day, when all the sycophants in Rome poured to the palace to offer their best wishes and presents to Sejanus, a bench gave way under those seated upon it, and when the great man issued from his doors, a cat ran across his path. When he offered sacrifice on the Capitol, so dense was the mass of people there packed that with a wave of his hand he signed to his attendants to take with his litter the 'Traitors' Way' and the Gemonian Steps, down which the bodies of criminals recently executed were cast, and the bearers slipped and fell as they bore their master. It was noticed that ravens croaked and fluttered above his head, and perched on the roof of the prison.

On reaching home Sejanus cast incense on the altar before an ancient statue of Good Fortune, and—so it was said afterwards—the goddess turned her head from him.

Sejanus had made himself too many enemies, and enlisted in his cause too many confederates, for his safety, the moment he ceased to

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cassius, lvi. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Suetonius says merely 'Julia,' without distinguishing which. Dio says 'Julia, the daughter of Drusus and Livia.' It is inconceivable that this can have been the daughter of Livilla, for whose hand he had made request. Germanicus, the brother of Livilla, had been adopted into the Julian family, and it is possible she might have a title to bear the name of Julia, having been adopted likewise. We do not, however, know this. As Tacitus makes no allusion to the betrothal to Sejanus when he mentions the marriage of Julia to Rubellius Blandus, it would seem that he must have considered the mother as the one betrothed, and not the daughter.

keep guard in person over the prince. Women had helped him in his crimes, and women brought him to his punishment. After Sejanus had left Capreae Tiberius had sent for his grandson Tiberius Gemellus, and for Caius, the youngest son of Germanicus, to be with him and divert him in his solitude. Antonia, the grandmother of Caius, the daughter of the triumvir, seized the opportunity to despatch a letter to the emperor, confided to the care of her most trusty servant, Pallas; and in this letter she made Tiberius aware of the cruel manner in which Sejanus, whom he had trusted, had betrayed his interests and wrought the dishonour of some of his family. But the letter told something more—that Sejanus had gone to Rome to ripen his deeply-laid schemes for a *coup de main*, which would subvert Tiberius, and enthrone himself. The scales fell from his eyes, and the old man saw plainly at last how he had been deceived.<sup>1</sup>

Sejanus, from the tenor of a letter now received by the senate from the prince, began to suspect that some forces were working secretly against his interest. Confident in his own powers of cajolery, he resolved to return to Capreae and meet these antagonistic influences and break them. He asked permission to leave Rome and revisit his master, alleging as his reason that he had heard tidings that Julia, his betrothed, was ill.

The desired permission was refused; the prince said in reply that he himself proposed to come to Rome; which was true. Under the circumstances, Tiberius believed he could trust none but himself. The position of the old emperor was as alarming as it was difficult. He knew that a large party of the most influential families in Rome were hostile to his government, either because they clung to the phantom hope of a restoration of the republic, or were attached to the cause of Agrippina. Others he had reason to suspect were so involved with Sejanus that they must stand by him at all costs. Sejanus was head of the praetorian guard, and he had brought his men together, to the number of ten thousand, and established them in a permanent camp on the most salubrious portion of the heights which radiate into the Esquiline, Viminal, and Pincian hills. To what extent the soldiers were likely to obey their commanding officer against himself, and their oath, that Tiberius could not conjecture. He made out a new commission over the praetorians, and gave it to Macro, an officer of his guard, and despatched him at once to Rome.

Tiberius wrote to the senate to say that he was very ill, and that he had not long to live, then sent tidings that he was better. This

<sup>1</sup> The letter to Tiberius, indited by Antonia, was written by Caenis, her freedwoman. After its despatch Antonia ordered her to destroy the rough copy. 'This would not protect you, mistress,' answered Caenis, 'for every word is engraved so deep in my heart that no time could efface it.' Caenis became afterwards the mistress of Vespasian, and amassed a great fortune by the sale of offices, it was said, not without the privity of Vespasian.—Dio Cassius, lxi. 14.

was probably true. He was thoroughly unhinged by the discovery of the treachery of Sejanus, and by his nervous terrors. In one letter he praised Sejanus, and then dropped words of blame; so that the favourite was himself perplexed and did not know what to make of these extraordinary communications. 'His anxiety,' says Dio Cassius, 'did not drive him into open rebellion, nor indeed had he sufficient confidence to stake all on an appeal to arms. Every one in Rome shared his uncertainty, the result of these conflicting tidings. Every one hesitated whether to pay homage to, or to shrink from Sejanus.'

It was expected one day that Tiberius would be on his way to Rome, and the next that his death would be announced.

Tiberius now dealt a master-stroke. He commended Caius, the youngest son of Agrippina, to the senate and the people, as his successor. He reckoned doubtless on the enthusiasm which this announcement would produce among a people who had still the greatest love for the memory of Germanicus. And the people received the decision of the emperor with tumultuous delight.

This was a fresh blow dealt Sejanus, who had reckoned on himself succeeding Tiberius. He felt instinctively that his chance of an appeal to the soldiers and to the people was cut away from him. It was noticed that in the imperial orders, the minister was named Sejanus, without any honourable prefix, contrary to the former habit of Tiberius. But occasionally tokens of favour were shown. Sejanus was nominated along with Caius to be priest in a college of which the emperor was himself a member, and Tiberius allowed the senate to confer on Sejanus, as it had formerly on Germanicus, the proconsular power.

Bewildered by these contradictions in the behaviour of the prince, cast from an extremity of hope to one of despair, uncertain about himself and those who surrounded him, Sejanus let slip the opportunity of taking that decided and bold step which Tiberius had dreaded. The emperor had played with him as with a fish, till he was ready to land him. This craft was a necessity under the circumstances. But on October 17th, A.D. 31, Naevius Sertorius Macro arrived in Rome, late in the evening with his commission, to supersede Sejanus in the command of the praetorians. Still uncertain as to the result of an appeal to the soldiers, Tiberius had caused to be circulated a report that Sejanus was about to have the tribunician authority granted him, which was equivalent to his appointment to be regent along with himself. All Rome believed the tidings. Sejanus, elated with pride, considered that he had reached the last step but one to sovereignty. His followers were filled with exultation, and those who had lately hesitated to show him honour, crowded about his doors to offer their tardy homage.

Macro, on his arrival in Rome, betook himself at once to the



house of the new consul Regulus, known to be hostile to Sejanus, and summoned thither to meet him Graecinus Laco, commander of the seven cohorts who acted as the night police of the capital, and were lodged in barracks in the different quarters of the city. To the consul and the commander of the cohorts Macro communicated the emperor's private orders, and prepared the requisite measures. The decisive blow was to be struck next day.

A session of the senate was appointed to meet in the morning at the temple of Apollo, near the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill. As Macro was on his way thither at daybreak he encountered Sejanus, also on his way to the same point, surrounded by a large retinue of servants, clients, and friends. A suspicion of evil crossed the mind of the minister at the sight of Macro, whom he had supposed to be in Capreae. He asked him eagerly if he had come from the emperor with letters to him, and was answered in the negative. Sejanus changed colour and halted. Macro noticed his alarm, and drawing him aside whispered that he was the bearer of a despatch to the senate relative to the tribunician authority for Sejanus. The minister in great delight hastened to the place of session, with head erect and face beaming with expectation. All present saw in his bearing a confirmation of the rumour that had reached their ears, and starting from their seats pressed round him with their congratulations; these he received with gracious condescension.

Macro had not entered the senate-house. As soon as he had seen the last flicker of the scarlet shoes of Sejanus as he passed within, he announced to the division of the guards sent to keep order, and to the praetorians who had attended the minister, that the command had been transferred to himself. To the latter he promised a gratuity from the emperor, and bade them withdraw to the camp. They obeyed without demur. Then promptly and silently the police under Laco surrounded the place of session.

When this measure was complete, Macro entered the temple and delivered the imperial order, then retired before it had been opened, in order to make the best of his way to the praetorian camp and secure the fidelity of the guards.

The scene that ensued was probably the most dramatic that had ever occurred in the senate.

As soon as the imperial messenger had left the assembly they proceeded to open and consider the letter. It was long and verbose. It began with comments on matters of no vital importance, and then proceeded to blame Sejanus. But the words levelled against the minister were not written consecutively, but were mixed up with remarks on other matters of public business. Then came a whole paragraph devoted to Sejanus, and a categorical demand for his impeachment on several grounds. The letter concluded with requiring the arrest first of two

senators closely allied to Sejanus and then of the minister himself. Tiberius renewed his declaration that he proposed returning to Rome, and stated that, as he was surrounded by enemies, he required the attendance of one of the consuls for his protection. The letter was written by the emperor in a tumult of nervous terrors, and with his mind unhinged by loss of confidence in the last man to whom he had clung and in whom he had believed.

The reading of this letter struck not Sejanus only, but the whole senate as a bolt from heaven. The consternation, the bewilderment were general, and the greater because the senators had but just vied with each other in adulation of the man who was thus struck before their eyes. Those who sat nearest him rose in silence, vacated their seats and placed themselves elsewhere, and the praetors and the tribunes of the people stepped into the empty places to surround the doomed man and prevent his escape.

But the suddenness with which he had been hurled from the highest pinnacle into the abyss was too great to allow Sejanus to exercise any presence of mind and decide on what was to be done. He sat, looking stonily before him, unmoved. The consul Regulus rose from his seat and ordered him to stand up. Sejanus heard but did not comprehend what was said. 'This was not due to pride,' says Dio, 'but to the fact that he was unaccustomed to obey.' The order was repeated, and repeated a third time by the consul in louder tones and with upraised arm. 'Sejanus! dost thou hear me?' he asked.

Then, as though roused from a trance, the unhappy man replied, 'What—do you call me?' He slowly rose, looking round for some one on whose shoulder to rest, but saw Laco, captain of the police, with sword unsheathed before him, and knew he was already a prisoner and a lost man.

Now ensued a scene of basest, most cowardly recrimination. From all sides rose hoots, curses, abuse, the wildest expressions of pent-up jealousy, hate, and thirst for revenge; and loudest of all yelled those who had crouched lowest but half an hour ago to kiss his hand. Those who had been his closest friends made themselves now most conspicuous as his enemies.

Nevertheless, the consul did not venture on an accusation of *maiestas*, as he could not calculate on the strength and determination of the party of Sejanus in the senate. They might combine in the danger that menaced all through their head. He demanded a formal charge to be made on which he might proceed legally to arrest Sejanus. One senator rose and in a shrill voice above the tumult, impeached the minister, thereupon Regulus at once ordered Laco to remove his prisoner to the Tullianum, the Capitoline prison. The whole proceeding was precipitate, so as not to allow the adherents of the fallen minister time to concert measures of resistance.

Already tidings of what had taken place had spread like wild-fire through the city; and when Sejanus came out between the guards on the descent of the Via Nova to the forum, he could see that the entire space was filled with an agitated sea of heads. His way led down the slope, the dip in the hill under the Porta Mugionis, past the temple of Jupiter Stator and the height now crowned with the convent and covered by the gardens of S. Sebastiano. On reaching the bottom of the hill the road turned sharply to the left above the house of the vestals. For a while hope flattered him. A vestal virgin might come out of the doors, meet him, and thereby obtain his reprieve if not his pardon. But none appeared. As the crowd pressed on his guards, spitting, throwing earth, cursing him, Sejanus endeavoured to cover his ghastly face with the folds of his purple-bordered mantle. A rude hand tore it away, another smote him in the face. His ears were deafened with cries, imprecations, jeers at his recent elation, reproaches for the violence, the judicial murders, he had wrought. As he came out above the temple of Castor and Pollux he could see the crowds engaged in tearing down his statues and pounding them to pieces. Then he was led across the forum past the Umbilicus, the supposed centre of the world, and the iron doors of the prison closed on him.

Hard by, a few paces off, stood the temple of Concord, with the splendid arcade of the Capitoline Tabularium rising high above it. Hither, a few hours later the trembling senators came, called together by the consul Regulus to decree the death of the shivering man now lying in the 'cold bath of Hercules,' a stone's-throw distant. Not an arm had been lifted, not a voice raised, in defence of the fallen minister; even the praetorians, on whose fidelity to his person he had reckoned, remained motionless. The people had declared with one voice against him. The senate hurriedly passed the necessary forms, and Sejanus was condemned to death.

A few minutes later the door of the Tullianum was opened, and down the Gemonian steps was cast the corpse of the man who a few hours before had been the most dreaded and respected in Rome. Hooks were driven into the still warm flesh, and it was dragged about the city, given up to insult by the people, and not till the third day after the execution was the mangled and disfigured mass cast into the Tiber. Seneca, who, as a man of five-and-thirty, was present in Rome at the time, has given us a short but graphic account of what he then saw.

Thus ended Sejanus, a sacrifice to his overweening ambition and to the bitter jealousy of the Roman nobility, says Juvenal, who half a century later sang the fall of the greatest minister Rome had seen or was destined to see, as a warning against pride and false security. Of him might be said what Voltaire said of Lally, that he was 'one against whom every one had a right to raise his hand, except the executioner.'

And now as a thing undone disappears the roll of his honours,  
 His statues follow the rope that draws them down from their places.  
 The axe is whirled at the wheels of the chariot where he was seated,  
 And e'en the legs of the horses that little deserve it are broken;  
 And now mutter the fires before the blast of the bellows,  
 The head adored of the people, the mighty Sejanus is melting.  
 Behold from out of the face, that in this world was the second,  
 They make but pitchers and pots and pans and bowls for the kitchen.  
 Go deck thy house with laurels, and bring to the temple white oxen,  
 Sejanus is drawn by the hook, a sight and a scoff to the people,  
 'Just look at the lips that did sneer! the face that once was so haughty!  
 Believe me, I hated the man, I never, I swear, was his creature.'  
 'But what was his crime?' I ask, 'and who has been his accuser?  
 What witnesses—evidence brought?' 'O, bless you! these were not asked for.  
 A great and a verbose letter that came from Capreae did it.'  
 'Enough. He is done for, and well, but what thereto say the people?'  
 'The people—they swim with the tide, and damn where Fortune has damned.  
 If Nursia the Tuscan had favoured, and Fate had frowned on the old man,  
 The people would now be exclaiming, "Long live Sejanus, our Caesar!"  
 But in fact all interest is gone, since no one will purchase their suffrage.  
 That people that once gave command, and legions, and honours—ay, all things,  
 At present has but one ambition,—for bread and then for the races.'  
 'I hear that many have fallen.' 'Of course, the oven is heated.  
 I saw Brutidius pass, all pale on his way to the altar.'  
 'Come, come, don't let us be late; let's kick the foe of great Caesar,  
 Whilst yet he lies on the bank!' 'But mind let the servants observe us,  
 That evidence may be at hand to show how we hated Sejanus.'

#### XI.—AFTER THE FALL.

THE outbreak of popular feeling described by Juvenal continued several days, and filled the city with terror. Lynch law was executed by the populace on several of the best known and worst hated of the companions and favourites of Sejanus. The praetorians, moreover, angry at their loyalty having being doubted, and at having been passed over in favour of the police, spread through the town firing houses and plundering. The emperor put a stop to these disorders. The senators, one and all, apprehensive of the jealousy of the prince and the populace, hastened to condemn every act of flattery of which they had lately been guilty. They issued a decree to forbid the wearing of mourning for the traitor, and ordered that the anniversary of his death should be a day of rejoicing for all generations. They heaped distinctions on Macro and Laco, and urged Tiberius to accept the title of Father of his country, an assumption he had ever modestly declined, and which he now once again and finally rejected, as well as the proposal that the senate should swear to all his acts.

'Steadfast as I feel myself,' said he, 'in all good and patriotic principles, yet all things human are liable to change. Never, so help

A.U.C. 784.  
 A.D. 31.  
 Aet. 72.



me the gods, will I bind the conscript fathers to indorse all the future acts of one who, even by the failing of his mental faculties, might at any time lapse from virtue.'

He named but a very few of the associates of Sejanus as obnoxious to himself, and these he did not desire to see sentenced to death. But the senate that had cringed was cowardly, and sought now to prove its devotion to the prince by the fury with which it devastated the ranks of the adherents of the fallen man. It was the old story again of



FIG. 76.—TIBERIUS. Bust from the Farnese Collection, National Museum, Naples.

the soldiers of Germanicus on the banks of the Rhine. Conscious of their own treasonable conduct, or of conduct capable of being regarded as treasonable, they outdid each other in the eagerness with which they sought out victims on whose bodies they might establish their own loyalty. A story of infinite sadness is told by Tacitus of the fate of the young children of Sejanus, of the poor little girl who asked what harm she had done, and what was wanted with her, as

she was hurried to the dungeon to be strangled under circumstances of unutterable horror.

‘Those who had previously sought the favour of Sejanus,’ says Dio, ‘were quaking with fear and anxiety for themselves, and those who had been employed by him as delators and witnesses saw themselves now in danger of being charged with having played their parts in his interest and not that of the prince. Only a few kept their composure and were confident, as they had not been involved in any of the recent quarrels.’ These latter it was who, as Dio adds, ‘laid the blame of all the wrong done upon Sejanus, and attributed little, if any, of it to the prince who, they believed, had known nothing of the things done by him, or had been forced by misrepresentation to act with seeming harshness.’ A deputation of nobles and knights was sent to Capreae to congratulate Tiberius on having crushed the haughty upstart. The prince declined to receive it. Regulus, the consul, hastened into Campania: he also was not received.

Shut up in solitude, the sick old man brooded for nine months over the past. He had loved this man Sejanus. When his own kinsfolk turned against him, he had found in him a friend. Uncertain himself in determining what to do in difficulties, he had placed the decision in the hands of Sejanus, with confidence in his fidelity and love.

Now his last, his only stay was taken from him, and his solitude was absolute. Every one he had trusted had failed him. His first wife he had been told had been unfaithful to him; his second wife he knew had been untrue. His adopted sons had turned against him in revolt. His mother had dealt him the cruellest blow conceivable in showing him that Augustus, whom he had revered and loved, had disliked and ridiculed him. Drusus, his own son, had caused him anxiety, and then had been snatched from him. The senate, the Roman people, for whom he had lived and laboured, inspired him with contempt and disgust at their servility and changeableness. He had trusted Sejanus, and his friend had proved false—how false he now had revealed to him, unexpectedly, to add to his despair and misery.

Apiciata, the divorced wife of Sejanus, frantic at the loss of her children, disclosed to the emperor the whole story of the poisoning of his son Drusus, through the connivance of Livilla, and then committed suicide. This led to an investigation, the examination of the physician who had mixed the poison and the chamberlain who had administered it. The whole of the infamous plot was revealed. All involved in it were put to death, except Livilla, the faithless wife of Drusus. Tiberius gave her her life and delivered her over to her mother, Antonia, who bade her starve herself to death.

Suetonius says: ‘Tiberius was so entirely occupied with the investigation of this affair, for whole days together, that, upon being informed that the person, in whose house he had lodged at Rhodes,

and whom by a friendly letter he had invited to Rome, was arrived, he ordered him immediately to be tortured, as a party concerned in the inquiry. Upon finding his mistake, he commanded him to be put to death, that he might not proclaim the wrong done to him. The place of execution is still shown at Capreae, where he ordered those who were condemned to die, after long and exquisite tortures, to be thrown, before his eyes, from a precipice into the sea. There a party of soldiers belonging to the fleet waited for them, and broke their bones with poles and oars, lest they should have any life left in them.'

That Tiberius had the murderers of his son executed, and that, frantic with wrath and regret, he may have had them tortured cruelly is possible enough; but we must not trust Suetonius too implicitly for the rest.

The discovery the old emperor had made of the treachery with which he had been surrounded must have filled him with despair in humanity, and a bitterness against all men, and at his own fate. In his autobiography he bewailed the fact that through the craft of Sejanus his nephews had been ruined. He wrote a letter to the Senate in which the unhinged condition of his mind was portrayed. 'Quite weary of himself,' says Suetonius, 'he acknowledged his extreme misery in a letter to the senate, which began thus: "What to write to you, Conscript Fathers, or how to write, or what not to write at this time, may all the gods and goddesses pour on my head a more dreadful vengeance than that under which I feel myself sinking daily, if I can tell."'

Whilst Tiberius was engaged at Capreae in the investigation of the murder of his son, a reign of terror was in progress in Rome, which perhaps the emperor was in no humour to stop.

It must be remembered that there was no public prosecutor in the Roman courts; any man might start up and bring accusations against another. In the old times of the Commonwealth it had become a recognised vexation to which every governor and magistrate was subjected, on leaving his office, that some young aspirant after fame or notoriety should impeach him. The grounds were formerly malversation, now *maiestas* or high treason. The prince had no hand in the impeachment of the real or supposed adherents of Sejanus, except only of such as he named, and they were few in number. But every man who felt himself compromised and thought to recover his credit by an impeachment, hastened to denounce some one else, and the trials were according to law. If the case were proved, the accused was capitally sentenced. The emperor was not above the law, and he could interfere with the judgments of the courts only by the exercise of his tribunician authority of 'provocation,' and to be incessantly interfering with the courts would have been denounced as a monstrous tyranny.

It was, says Tacitus, after the prince had left Rome and retired to Capreae that 'the fury of the informers grew daily more fierce and relentless, and continued its career without hindrance.' Domitius Afer attacked Quintilius Varus, the kinsman of Tiberius, and Publius Dolabella associated himself with him in the suit, regardless of the ties of blood which linked him to the accused. The senate stopped the process by voting that it should be adjourned till the return of the prince. And Tacitus says that it was by such means alone that any relief was afforded from the overwhelming plague of delatorship (*quod unum urgentium malorum suffugium in tempus erat*).

We fall into grievous error if we assume that the many victims who perished during the reign of Tiberius were victims to his jealousy, and that he was more than indirectly guilty of their blood. In his time the old and pestilent system of delation reached a head, but that system was a legacy of the Republic, and Tiberius was too pedantic a stickler for law to interfere with a practice which, infamous though it was, was clung to with pertinacity as a privilege inherited from the days of freedom.

'The liberty of the Roman citizen,' says Dean Merivale, 'was maintained by a system of universal terrorism. Every citizen was invited to watch over the conduct of his compatriots, and to menace every deviation from the path of civil virtue with a public accusation. Every young noble was trained in the art of pleading, partly to enable him, when his own turn came, to defend himself, but primarily to furnish him with weapons of offence, and thereby with the means of self-advancement. Rhetoric was an instrument of power, by which he might expect to make himself admired by the people, and feared by competitors of his own class. He fought his way to public honours on the floor of the law-courts, dragging successively from their benches the tribunes, the praetors, and the consuls, before whom he first began his career of eloquence.

'The intrigues and treasons of the men in power did not always suffice to furnish victims for this mania of impeachment: it was necessary to extend the inquisition into the provinces, and summon before the bar of Roman opinion the governors who had sinned, if not against the laws of the Republic, against those at least of humanity and justice. To interest the citizens, to inflame their passions, to bias their judgments on the subject of crimes thus perpetrated on remote provincials, required great exertion of art and eloquence; but the genius and industry of the young advocates and their teachers kept pace with every demand upon them. Feelings of party were appealed to in the place of genuine patriotism. The truth of the accusation became of little importance; it was the great triumph of the rhetorician, not unfrequently gained, to baffle the interests of a political faction,



without regard to the intrinsic merits of the case. The young orator, who, at the age of nineteen or twenty, could sway the votes of a bench of judges against some veteran proconsul grown grey in the service of the State, was marked as sure to rise to the highest political eminence. Neither shame nor humanity interfered to check this passion for accusation, in which the Romans were to the full as unscrupulous and unfeeling as they were in invading the lands of the foreigner.<sup>1</sup>

This then was a deeply inrooted habit; it was regarded as an institution especially Roman, and essential for the pushing of the fortunes of the young and ambitious. To abolish the system would be to disturb the foundation of the polity. It was rampant and mischievous before the days of the first Caesar. Every great official had to reckon with it, and he prepared for it by amassing plunder wherewith to bribe his judges. The period of bribery was over; but impeachment became, if possible, more vigorous. He who could bring a criminal to punishment received a quarter of his estates and possessions, and not unfrequently a money-grant as well.

‘This common act of accusation, the birthright of the Roman citizen, the palladium, so esteemed, of Roman freedom, became the most convenient instrument of despotism. But, however odious such a profession might generally make itself, whatever the infamy to which it would be consigned by posterity, those who practised it reaped the reward they sought in money and celebrity, in influence and authority, in the favour of the prince, and not rarely in the applause of the multitude.’

Delation was a private speculation, and the Roman aspirants after honours and fortune were as utterly unscrupulous as to the misery they wrought in families and the wrongs done to individuals as are the floaters of bogus companies in England at the present day. The profits, the gain, if they succeeded, were great; but they ran risks: for an accuser, if he failed to prove his case, was answerable for having accused falsely. Even under the most despotic emperors such men as failed were punished with exile or death. A public whipping, the stocks, branding, the loss of freedom, sentence to be sold into slavery, deportation to desert islands—such were the punishments allotted to those who delated and were unable to substantiate their charges.

The laws of treason were in existence, the institution of delation was in full vigour, before the Caesars became the heads of the state.<sup>1</sup> Both were a legacy from the Republic. The princes did not attempt a reformation of the whole judicial system of the laws. Julius Caesar might have done it had he been suffered to live, for his was a mind capable of striking out new lines, laying fresh foundations, and the abolition of delatorship meant the total reorganisation of the Roman system for the maintenance of the law. But Augustus, and especially

<sup>1</sup> Except the *lex Julia*, enacted by Augustus.

Tiberius, were not capable of evolving a new system, they could but interfere now and then to check abuses under the old system.

Tacitus is the only historian who speaks of Tiberius as favouring delators and accusations of treason. Suetonius makes no such charge, and Dio Cassius, on the contrary, tells us that Tiberius interfered to put restraint on the system, forbidding officers in the army appearing as accusers, and that he limited the right to senators and knights. Tacitus tells us that, late on in life, in his seventy-third year, he interfered to oppose a motion in the senate to curtail or abolish the payments given to delators, alleging, 'with a sternness contrary to his usual way,' that this would interfere with the execution of justice. 'So long as the laws stood,' said Tiberius, 'you must have guardians to see that they are not violated.' Which was true enough; the whole system was bad and should be radically dealt with. As it was, every Roman was a self-constituted vindicator of the law. There were no police to watch that the laws were observed, every Roman was supposed to look to it that the law was not infringed. Tacitus admits that Tiberius took measures to check the insolence of the accusers. He says, for instance, that in A.D. 22, the ninth year of his reign, 'Tiberius gained great credit for his moderation, because he checked the presumption of the informers.' In A.D. 25, his twelfth year: 'This whole year was marked with one uninterrupted series of accusations, so that, even in the Latin festival, when Drusus had ascended the tribunal to be inaugurated praefect of the city, he was accosted by Calpurnius Salvianus, who wanted to impeach Sextus Marius. This Caesar openly resented, and this led to the banishment of 'Salvianus.' Moreover, Tiberius again and again throughout his reign dealt severely with those who brought false accusations against honourable men; when the sentences pronounced by the senate were harsh, he frequently mitigated their severity. 'The informers,' says Tacitus, 'went beyond the intentions of the law, and they had got Italy, Rome, and the Roman citizens into their clutches. Numbers were stripped of their entire fortunes, and all had the terror of them before their eyes; when Tiberius chose by lot five men of consular rank, five of praetorian, and ten of senatorial rank, to apply a remedy; by these most of the legal intricacies were explained, and some alleviation afforded to the pressing mischief.'<sup>1</sup>

The case of Lutorius exhibits very fairly the condition of affairs owing to the plague of delation, and shows where lay the blame for bloodshed. Lutorius, a Roman knight given to verse-making, had composed a poem during the illness of Drusus, which he proposed publishing if the sickness proved mortal. Drusus got well, but Lutorius could not refrain from reading his poem to some ladies of quality. Unhappily a wretched informer heard of this, and brought a charge of treason against the poet. Haterius Agrippa, consul-elect, was for his execution,

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 28.

but Manius Lepidus rose in the senate and said: 'The clemency of the prince is wont to moderate the severity of punishments. There is a difference between vanity and villany, between empty words and nefarious deeds. I have often heard our prince bewail the event, when, by suicide, a criminal has prevented the exercise of his mercy.' Lepidus voted that the poet should be outlawed, but only one man of consular rank voted with him, all the rest voted with Agrippa. Lutorius was thereupon led away to prison and strangled. Tiberius was absent; on hearing of this execution he was indignant, and complained before the senate of their act, and entreated them, in future, 'not to be so precipitate in punishing for mere words.' The consequence of this was that a decree was passed that not less than ten days should elapse between a condemnation and an execution.<sup>1</sup> This shows us that it was the senate which condemned in its cowardice and adulation. When a portion of the confiscated effects of the condemned went to the exchequer, they thought they were conferring an obligation on the emperor when at the same time they rid him of one ill affected to him, and poured the wealth of the victim into his lap. They taught a dangerous expedient, which was turned against themselves with sweeping effect in succeeding reigns. In a great many cases Tiberius stepped between the senate and their victim. Towards the end of his reign, when at Capreae, and with all faith in the truth, honesty, and fidelity of men broken down, made irritable by ill health, he interfered less frequently, and is so far guilty of bloodshed that he might have interposed, and did not always do so.

Caius Silanus had been proconsul of Asia, and had used extortion and rapacity in his province. He was accused, and no doubts whatever were entertained that he was guilty. This crime of which Silanus was accused was precisely one which Tiberius was resolved to chastise severely. Silanus, feeling it impossible to clear himself, abandoned his defence and appealed to the mercy of the emperor.

The court decreed his outlawry, 'that he should be interdicted from fire and water, and banished to the island of Gyarus.' The prince interfered. 'This islet,' said he, 'was inhospitable, devoid of culture,' and he asked that the place of banishment might be changed to Cythera. Dolabella urged that the pains inflicted on him should be heightened, as he was reputed to be a man of profligate life. 'These are mere rumours,' said Tiberius; 'we must not judge according to reports.' Lentulus proposed that not all the estate of Silanus should be confiscated, but only what was his own, that the rich inheritance of his mother should be left untouched, and given to the son. Tiberius at once assented. Tacitus says, 'Tiberius was ever ready to show gentleness where his own personal resentments did not stand in the way.'

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 49-51. This decree was carried by Tiberius insisting on it, 'in order that he, even if away travelling, might have time to hear and judge.'—Dio lvii. 20.

When Lucius Ennius was impeached of treason 'for converting an effigy of the prince into the ordinary purposes to which silver is applied, Tiberius would not suffer the case to be proceeded with, whereupon up sprang Ateius Capito to declare that 'the emperor had no right to interfere with the fathers trying a case; nor ought he to prevent them from punishing an act of such flagrant iniquity; nor ought so gross an iniquity to be suffered to pass unpunished.' Nevertheless Tiberius remained peremptory in his refusal to allow this trial to take place.

Tacitus tells us that Tiberius was usually artificial and cumbrous in his manner, as if he were struggling to give vent to his sentiments; but, 'whenever he spoke as an advocate, he delivered himself with readiness and volubility.' When, in the eleventh year of his reign, Serenus was sentenced to death, Tiberius interposed and suggested banishment. Asinius Gallus then moved that he should be sent to the isle of Gyarus or to Donusa. Again Tiberius interfered, saying these islands were destitute of water, and he was sent to Amorgos.

Lucius Sejanus, brother to the fallen minister, had acted with extreme temerity: he had dared to turn the old bald emperor into ridicule. At the feast of the Floralia he had got all the performers to shave their heads, and all the link-boys who lighted the populace on their return from the theatre were also close shaven, in ludicrous imitation of the condition of the head of Tiberius. But this slight—this piece of insolent vulgarity—was passed over by the emperor, and Lucius Sejanus was not among those who were condemned. Marcus Terentius, a friend of the fallen favourite, when accused before the senate by a delator, frankly admitted that he had been intimate with the late minister. 'Sejanus, the Vulsinian,' said he, 'was not the man I courted, but Sejanus, the son-in-law of Caesar, his colleague in the consulship.' He had loved Sejanus, but so had also Tiberius. 'Let conspiracy against the state,' concluded he, 'let murderous designs against the prince be punished; but as to the offices of friendship and regard for Sejanus, Caesar and I stand on the same footing.' Terentius was not only discharged, but his accusers were found guilty of false accusation and were banished. Cotta Messalinus was accused of having given Caligula a coarse nickname, and of having spoken disrespectfully of the late empress-mother, and contemptuously of the prince himself as his 'dear little Tiberius.' The senate were determined to condemn him, but he appealed to the emperor, who at once wrote in his favour, pleading the many good services Cotta had done, and urged 'that words maliciously distorted, and the harmlessness of convivial discourse, should never be wrested into crimes.'

A delator accused a senator of having sold a statue of the emperor along with his house. He would have been sentenced to death had not Tiberius been present and given his vote for acquittal.

King Archelaus of Cappadocia was summoned to Rome by Tiberius;



he was old, gouty, and sometimes off his head, so that he had governed capriciously and badly. Indeed, Augustus had been forced to appoint a regent at one time when Archelaus had been actually insane. Tiberius bade him appear before the senate, when a witness asserted he had heard the old man declare, 'If once I get home, I'll make the prince feel the weight of my fist!' This provoked such a general burst of laughter, that Tiberius urged his acquittal. A senator, Lentulus, old and of the most amiable character, was accused before the senate of having formed designs against the life of the emperor. Tiberius rose in his place and said, 'I should not be worthy of life if I could have incurred the hatred of Lentulus.'

The senate had forbidden the wearing of mourning for Sejanus and those of his adherents who were executed. Tiberius rescinded this order, and insisted that liberty should be allowed to all to bear the outward token of sorrow for those they loved. A fragment of Dio Cassius informs us that Tiberius extended his protection to a number of the friends of Sejanus who admitted their intimacy with him; men like Marcus Terentius, whose outspokenness, Dio says, met with the approval of Tiberius himself. Lentulus Gaetulicus, commander of the German legions, was charged with having betrothed his daughter to the son of Sejanus. He appealed directly to the emperor from the senate, and was at once accorded protection, and his accusers were punished.

From the account of the executions that followed the fall of Sejanus, given us by Dio, we see that the accusations were made *proprio motu* by the senators and knights themselves without any urgency from Tiberius.

He says: 'They condemned the men for doing exactly what they had previously consented to themselves. . . . Accusers were found mainly among those who had formerly most courted Sejanus. They best knew their likes, and found it no difficult matter to point them out and find evidence against them. Thus some became delators and witnesses to save themselves, or in hopes of receiving offices and rewards. For in the reign of Tiberius all delators obtained a share of the property of the sentenced, and rewards from the treasury, and also offices of honour. Indeed those who were specially ready to bring others into misfortune, or to bring the sentence of death on them, received statues and triumphal insignia, so that many respectable men declined these honours that they might not rank with such unworthy creatures. But these men were deceived in their expectations, for they were in their turn accused by others of the same crimes, and were put to death, partly on this account, partly as having betrayed their friends. All accusations Tiberius referred to the senate, so as to be himself blameless, and let the senate itself condemn to death, and they went to work right lustily capitally sentencing each other. But not only were

many of the delators brought to account, but also the witnesses were witnessed against by others, and the same judgment they had pronounced against others was pronounced on the judges themselves.'

When Tiberius was a recluse at Capreae, bowed under his sorrows, and with a heart full of bitterness, he was no longer able to follow the trials that took place in the senate and courts of justice, and to judge how far these were promoted by a genuine desire to maintain the laws and punish wrong, and how far they were due to private resentment, to cupidity, and to adulation. Men like Macro, who rose into influence after the fall of Sejanus, exercised power because the emperor was infirm and failing, and they used this power to destroy their adversaries.

Tiberius complained that the business of government was more than he had time and power to attend to. He may well have judged that if the nobles and knights of Rome were not able to protect their own lives and properties, then it was not his place to interfere. It was they who suffered, and it was they who inflicted every blow by which they suffered. And it was they who should defend themselves.

No more impartial writer can be found than Philo the Jew; his sympathies were not enlisted on the side of the aristocracy or on that of the emperor. The testimony he gives to the character of Tiberius is valuable for that reason, and also because he was a contemporary. This is what he says of Tiberius—he is not speaking directly of him, but he alludes to him in reference to Caius. Caius, says he, 'succeeded to 'an empire that was well organised, tending everywhere to concord; north and south, east and west brought into friendship; Greeks and barbarians united, soldiers and citizens linked together in the bonds of a happy peace.' He succeeded to a well-filled treasury 'in which was wealth of gold and silver, ingots and coins, cups, and other vessels of worth.' 'Tiberius was endowed with profound penetration, and was the most skilful of all the men about him to read the secrets of men's thoughts.' 'Tiberius hated puerile flattery, and from his childhood showed a tendency towards gravity and severity.'

Philo tells us with what equity and gentleness Tiberius treated the Jews. He speaks of the cruelties committed by Caius, the wanton murders and mutilations, as a new thing, as something unknown under Augustus and Tiberius.

Early in the year A.D. 32, Tiberius crossed the narrow strait dividing Capreae from the Campanian coast, and proceeded towards Rome. Thereupon a certain Togonius Gallus sought to ingratiate himself with the emperor by proposing that a body of twenty of the most illustrious senators should be appointed to bear arms and attend on the person of the prince, and defend him, whenever he entered the senate.

Tiberius gently, but with irony, refused the honour. 'Who,' asked he, 'would be chosen? Who passed over? Was he always to have

A.U.C. 785.

A.D. 32.

Act. 73.

the same men to constitute his body-guard, or was there to be perpetual rotation? Were they to be young men or old, bowed down by years? Were they to be magistrates or otherwise? and then,' continued he, 'what a spectacle it would be to see these men draw their swords in the portico of the senate-house! Verily, I do not hold my life of such importance that it need be thus protected.'

Tiberius leisurely proceeded up the coast in a trireme to Ostia and then ascended the Tiber. Crowds lined the banks, the obsequious nobles and senators poured from the gates to meet him. But the old man, broken by disappointment, sickness, and years, shrank from encountering again the servile horde, and he retired to his gardens and villa on the Janiculan hill whence he could see the mighty city, divided from it by the yellow Tiber. This visit he made more than once, but never again set foot within Rome. That irresolution probably still haunted him which had marred his whole life. He left Capreae intending to return to Rome, and then shrank from the worry, the adulation, the scramble for favours, the strain on his overtaxed powers, and after a short rest in his villa, returned in the trireme once more to the rocks of Capreae.

'This extraordinary proceeding, the effect of fear or disgust, caused no doubt deep mortification among the populace. It was followed by indignant murmurs, and petulantly ascribed to the foulest motives. Such, it was muttered, was the caprice, not of a princeps or an emperor, the child of law and organised government, but of a king; such a king as ruled with despotic sway over the slaves of Asia; such a king as, guarded in the citadel of Ctesiphon or Artaxata, despised all human feelings, and trampled on all principles, sporting, for his selfish pleasure, with not the lives only, but the honour of his miserable subjects. . . . He slunk, it was asserted, from the sight of the good and pure to the obscurity of his detestable orgies; he was the patron of panders, the sport of minions; he was drunk with wine and drunk with blood; the details which were freely circulated of his cruelty and licentiousness were coloured from the most loathsome scenes of the stews and the slave-market.'—(Merivale.)

A word has been already said relative to the stories of the infamies of Capreae, but they must now be considered a little more closely.

Tacitus himself allows that the life of Tiberius up to his fifty-seventh year was blameless and pure. As long as he was under the influence of Sejanus 'he observed a secrecy and caution in the gratification of his appetites,' that is to say, till he was in his seventy-third year. After the fall of Sejanus, however, 'he broke out at once into acts of atrocious villainy and revolting depravity.'

It is certainly remarkable, relative to his cruelty, that not a single name is recorded of any one put to death under his eyes at Capreae, except the surgeon and chamberlain who had poisoned his son. It is

hard to imagine wanton cruelty in an aged man who had always abstained with loathing from gladiatorial shows.

The charge of dissolute morals is even worse substantiated. All accounts of the licentious abominations committed by Tiberius are referred to his life from his seventy-fourth to his seventy-ninth year, and to a time when he was suffering from the break-up of his constitution and from continuous ill-health. All the scandalous stories refer to the retreat to Capreae. The Romans could not comprehend how a man should care to live away from Rome. To be away from the capital, its shows, its festivals, its scandal, was to be out of the world—death were preferable. The love of retirement, manifest in Tiberius when he went to Rhodes, that shyness which he was never able to cast off, weariness with the cabals of the capital ever reformed as fast as broken, combined to make Tiberius, as he felt his powers fail, and when troubled with physical disorder, seek a refuge out of the current of Roman life, where, nevertheless, he could control the course of public affairs. But a man of his temperament and reserve was so incomprehensible to the Roman society-man that he was driven to invent reasons satisfactory to himself to explain this voluntary banishment. The depraved imagination of Roman society, together with personal hatred, combined to form a myth that enveloped the recluse, and completely obscured his true motives and conduct in his place of retreat.

Moreover, we know that it was customary to attribute all kinds of turpitudes to political enemies. As long as Tiberius lived among the Romans, and his entire life was public, it was not possible to blacken his blameless character; but when he had withdrawn from view he became fair game for the libellers and scandal-mongers. Tiberius heard of some of the disgusting stories circulating concerning himself, and complained to the senate of them, and insisted on an investigation. Thus, much of the floating filth was taken into the public acts, and there Tacitus and Suetonius read these stories, and, finding them there, adopted them into their histories to spice them to the public taste. Dio says: 'As the Caesar searched out whatever had been said against him, he exposed to the public every conceivable kind of abomination, and all this was inscribed in the official protocols. . . . Thus, in punishing others for slanders against his majesty, he brought upon himself a great burden of libel, and made himself an object of general mockery.'

In all this he was curiously irresolute and inconsistent: sometimes he scorned to take notice of the infamous tales and scurrilous verses circulating relative to him; at other times he insisted on their being investigated and the circulators or authors chastised.

But there are positive facts which make us doubt these odious stories. Tiberius had brought to Capreae the two boys, Caligula and



Gemellus, to live there under his supervision. Moreover, there resided with him in his villa both Livilla and her daughter Julia ; also, after A.D. 35, the young wife of Caligula. Is it conceivable that the old man should have surrounded himself with his young relatives to witness his debauches? Suetonius himself tells us that when Caligula sought to indulge his disorderly appetites he had to disguise himself in a wig and muffler, so as to slip out unobserved by the old man. And Philo, a contemporary, and one peculiarly likely to be well informed on the life at Capreae, explains the sickness of Caligula, after he succeeded to the empire, as due to the revulsion of habit, the indulgence in all kinds of licence, after 'the simple and wholesome mode of life' in Capreae. Dio tells us that in A.D. 21 Tiberius banished the theatrical dancers from Rome because 'they wounded the respect due to women' by their gestures and words. This implies that he was a man who abhorred grossness, and, in spite of sad experiences, held womankind in honour.

The first to throw doubt on these narratives was Voltaire, and his words deserve quotation. 'I have often said to myself, in reading Tacitus and Suetonius: are all these atrocious extravagances attributed to Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero actual facts? Can I believe, on the testimony of one man, who lived a long time after Tiberius, that the emperor, when nearly eighty years old, who had always lived a life decent to austerity—that this emperor spent his time at Capri in debauches which would have made a young rake blush? Can I be sure that he changed the throne of the world into a common stew in a manner unknown to the most dissolute youths? The abominations related of him are in their nature incredible. An old man, an emperor observed of all who approach him, with the eyes of the whole world fixed searchingly upon him, is he to be accused of such inconceivable infamy without proper evidence? Where are the proofs produced by Suetonius? There are none. Who has ever seen an old judge, chancellor, archbishop, king, assemble about him a hundred attendants to partake with him in such abominable orgies, to be an object of ridicule, of contempt, to them? Tiberius was detested; and I am quite sure, had I been a Roman citizen, I would have hated him and Octavius, because both destroyed my republic. The hard and crafty Tiberius was execrated; and because in his advanced old age he retired to Capri, it was at once alleged that he had gone there to devote himself to the most unworthy debauches. But is the fact certain? I have heard all kinds of horrible stories circulated relative to a great prince (the Duke of Orleans, Regent of France) and to his daughter, but I never believed them, and time has justified my incredulity. I can understand that every Roman had a republican soul in his closet, and that he revenged himself sometimes, pen in hand, for the usurpation of the emperor. I presume that the malicious (*malin*) Tacitus, and that

anecdote-collector Suetonius, tasted supreme satisfaction in decrying their masters at a time when nobody troubled himself to discuss the truth of what was told. Our copyists of all countries and at all times have repeated these baseless tales. They resemble not a little the historians of the Middle Ages who followed the dreams of the monks. These latter blasted the reputations of all the princes who did not give them great largesses, and so Tacitus and Suetonius set themselves to render odious the whole family of the oppressor Octavius.<sup>1</sup>

## XII.—THE DEATHS OF DRUSUS AND AGRIPPINA.

WE must go back to the trial and condemnation of Agrippina and her sons Nero and Drusus. Unfortunately we know no details of the trial; but, though it is probable that Sejanus had drawn on the princes to their destruction, it is also probable that they and their mother had entered into some conspiracy against the life of the emperor with full knowledge of what they were about. Tiberius did not banish and imprison them till they had been brought before him personally, that he might convince himself of the reality of their guilt.

A.U.C. 782.  
A.D. 29.  
Act. 70.

Agrippina was conveyed first of all to Herculaneum, where there was an imperial villa, and there she remained under guard for some time. There also she was visited by Tiberius, when a scene of violence ensued; she pouring forth the pent-up fury in her heart in reviling the prince. Suetonius says that thereupon he 'caused a centurion to beat out one of her eyes'—a most improbable story. That she may have been hurt whilst being restrained in her violence is probable, and so also is it probable that this was magnified by popular rumour. It was inserted by Agrippina the Younger in her *Memoirs*, whence Suetonius drew the story. In after years Caligula had the villa at Herculaneum levelled with the dust, and in the time of Seneca visitors were shown the spot where were strewn the fragments of the house in which the mother of Caligula suffered such indignities.<sup>2</sup>

From Herculaneum Agrippina was conveyed to Pandateria (Ponza), where she was retained as a state prisoner. Nero was sent to a neighbouring islet, and there died, having starved himself to death.

Two years later came the fall of Sejanus, and Agrippina may have entertained hopes that this would be followed by her release. Rumours circulated among the people of Rome that the emperor was inclined to a reconciliation with her and her sons. But she was too deeply compromised for him to allow her liberty

A.U.C. 784.  
A.D. 31.  
Act. 72.

<sup>1</sup> 'Le Pyrrhonisme de l'histoire;' in *Œuvres de Voltaire*. Paris, 1792; vol. xxxvi. p. 43 seq.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *De Ira*, iii. 272. The author of the tragedy *Octavia*, a late contemporary of Suetonius, alludes to the blows and chains which Agrippina endured, but says nothing about her having been blinded in one eye.

to return to Rome and begin again to weave the threads of intrigue. Tiberius in his own *Memoirs* lamented that Sejanus had drawn the young princes to ruin ; but only one was then dead—Nero, the eldest. Drusus was still alive, a prisoner on the Palatine hill. The continued incarceration of Agrippina and Drusus is only explicable on the supposition that they had been too deeply implicated in the attempt on the life



FIG. 77.—DRUSUS, son of Germanicus ?). Bust in the Capitoline Museum.<sup>1</sup>

of the emperor for him to think of releasing them ; and, with respect to Drusus, there are grounds for supposing that he was deranged. The horrible revelation of the poisoning of Drusus, son of Tiberius, had been made ; and even if no evidence had been forthcoming to prove

<sup>1</sup> No busts can be attributed with even approximate certainty to Drusus, son of Germanicus and Agrippina. There are, however, certain heads that certainly belong to the family, from their likeness to the Claudian features. Among these is one in the Capitoline Museum, Fig. 77 (Hall of Emperors), and another in the Lateran Museum, that have a distinct individuality and resemblance, and a somewhat wild look. These may be Drusus.

that Agrippina had been privy to this crime, yet the advantage the removal of the heir to the throne was to her and her sons was so obvious that, coupled with the exposure of the plot to rid them of himself, there were grounds enough for his not releasing the turbulent woman from her place of confinement.

Asinius Gallus, her confidant and kinsman, had been arrested at the same time as herself, or shortly after, and had been condemned to death by the senate; but Tiberius, with his wonted benignity, A.U.C. 786.  
A.D. 33.  
Act. 74. had commuted the sentence into imprisonment, and he died of starvation. 'That he perished by famine is undoubted,' says Tacitus; 'but whether of his own accord or by constraint, was held to be uncertain.' Dio says that Tiberius, fearing lest he should commit suicide, had him watched by a praetor, 'not to prevent his flight—no, by Zeus! but to prevent his death.' He says that food was served to him, but not of the most nourishing quality, and that he was denied permission to be visited by his friends and attended by his slaves. On his death Tiberius expressed his dissatisfaction, so that we may suppose he starved himself. The senate, in obsequious meanness, knowing how deep were the wounds this man had dealt Tiberius, were for forbidding him sepulchral rites; but the prince interfered to suffer him to be buried with the honours due to his abilities and family.

Then came the death of Drusus, one of the most tragic in the *Annals* of Tacitus; and, if we accepted his story as it stands, it would stamp Tiberius as a monster of inhumanity.

'Soon after the death of Asinius Gallus'—that is to say, in A.D. 33—'the light of Drusus was quenched, after having protracted his existence to the ninth day, by means of the wretched nutriment afforded by the stuffing of his bed. Some have related that, in case Sejanus had attempted force, Macro had instructions to take the young man from his confinement and set him at the head of the people; afterwards, because a report was circulated that the prince was about to be reconciled with his daughter-in-law and grandson, he chose rather to be accounted cruel than to have changed his purpose. Nay, even after death he pursued Drusus with invectives, charging him with abominable impurity, with a spirit breathing destruction to his family, and with hostility to the republic.'

A comment on this passage is advisable before proceeding further. It was, it would appear, reported that the emperor commanded the young prince to be placed at the head of the troops, should Sejanus attempt resistance. If so, then this looks very much as though Tiberius still regarded Drusus as heir to the throne. Again, the emperor complains of him—of this there is no doubt—that he had been guilty of vile moral disorders, and it was, in part, because of this abominable life that he had the young man put under restraint. And yet, if we may trust Tacitus and Suetonius, the aged man was at that very time guilty of the



same vices which he condemned in the young man ! He had complained of the same thing in the case of Nero. It is, of course, possible that he may have resented immorality in others whilst immoral himself, but it is far more probable that the vile charges made against him were unfounded. That Drusus had 'a spirit breathing destruction to his own family' is not to be doubted. Tacitus admits as much ; he hated his brother, and conspired against him, and was on bad terms with his mother.

After the death of Drusus, Tiberius ordered the minutes of his last days to be read before the senate. 'This,' says Tacitus, 'was thought a proceeding of unparalleled atrocity : that for so many years spies should have attended him, to note down his looks, his groans, his secret murmurs ; but that his grandfather could hear the tale, read it, and expose it to the public, would hardly be credible, had we not the letters of Attius the centurion, and Didymus the freedman, recording the names of the slaves who struck him as he was leaving his chamber, or terrified him with menaces. The centurion, moreover, recorded, as matter of special merit, his own language addressed to Drusus—language full of barbarity—and the words of Drusus when sinking under famine ; in which, at first feigning madness, he pronounced, as if in a frenzy, deadly denunciations against Tiberius, and afterwards, when all hopes of life had fled, he poured forth studied and deliberate imprecations, "that as Tiberius had slaughtered his son's wife,<sup>1</sup> the son of his brother, and his nephews, and filled his whole house with carnage, so might he pay to the uttermost the penalty of his crimes, in justice to his name, to the honour of his ancestors, and to posterity." The senators interrupted the reader with exclamations of assumed horror, but their hearts were charged with amazement, that he who had hitherto been so wary, and so careful to draw a dense veil over his iniquities, should have arrived at such a pitch of hardihood as to remove, as it were, the prison walls and reveal to all eyes his own grandson under the lash of a centurion, exposed to the violence of slaves, and in vain imploring the homeliest alimient of life.' Here, again, the narrative of Tacitus calls for comment.

Drusus was next heir to the throne after the death of his elder brother. So long as he did not revolt against his great uncle, Tiberius had no reason for treating him with barbarity. The old emperor in this case acted differently from his wont. He gave the most minute and open narrative of all the circumstances attending the imprisonment and death of Drusus. This it is not possible to suppose he would have done had he thought that his conduct towards Drusus would call for animadversion. Tacitus gives us a hint as to what probably explains the incarceration of Drusus and the openness of Tiberius in exhibiting the minutes of his conduct whilst in prison. He says that Drusus

<sup>1</sup> Livilla, the wife of Drusus, who had poisoned her husband, was not put to death by Tiberius. The prince sent her to her mother Antonia, who urged her to commit suicide.

feigned himself mad. There was insanity in the family. Agrippa Postumus had been a madman. Madness developed in the head of his own brother Caius. His mother's unreasoning hate and wanton violence are hardly explicable except on the supposition that she was not responsible for her acts. If we suppose that the low and repulsive vices to which Drusus was addicted had deranged a mind never sound, then the whole aspect of the story is changed. We can understand why, instead of being sent to an island, he was reserved under close supervision in the cells of the basement of the palace; why a daily journal of his conduct was kept; and finally why Tiberius did not shrink from having this read in public. The young man in his ravings had denounced him as the murderer of Germanicus, and so certain was



FIG. 78.—TIBERIUS. Bust in the Mus. Capitol.

Tiberius that no rational being shared in this judgment that he suffered this accusation to be detailed before the senate.

There was, however, another reason why every particular relative to the death of Drusus should be published,—that no doubt might remain that he was dead.

There had appeared recently in the provinces of Achaia and Asia an impostor, pretending to be Drusus, the son of Germanicus, who had escaped from his place of detention and was about to put himself at the head of the legions in Asia. The rumour produced the utmost commotion in the eastern provinces. 'There was,' says Tacitus, 'a likeness in the ages of the two men, and some of the prince's freed-

men, as if they recognised him, attached themselves to him, but it was with the purpose of betraying him. He was attended by a crowd of young men, and eager partisans thronged to him, elated at his success, and full of airy hopes. At this juncture Popæus Sabinus was in Macedonia, and he had charge of Greece. To prevent further mischief he at once passed the bays of Torone and Thermæ, reached Euboea, passed along the coast of Corinth, and entered Nicopolis, a Roman colony. Here he learned that the man, on being shrewdly questioned, had allowed himself to be the son of Marcus Silanus; and that, many of his followers having deserted, he had embarked as if for Italy. Sabinus sent this account to Tiberius, and further than this we have found nothing as to the origin and issue of the affair.' Tiberius had been troubled at the beginning of his reign by the appearance of a false Agrippa Postumus, and now took means to prevent another attempt at personation of Drusus after the failure of the venture of this Silanus. M. Junius Silanus, whose son the impostor pretended to be, was consul in A.D. 19. In A.D. 33, his daughter Junia Claudilla was given by Tiberius to Caligula as wife. Another daughter was a friend of Agrippina.

The conduct of Tiberius towards the two princes, as represented by Tacitus, is capricious and unreasonable; and Tiberius was not a man who acted on caprice and without consideration. On the death of Germanicus, Tiberius had recommended the boys to his son Drusus, who had shown them warm and sincere affection.

When on January 7, A.D. 20, Nero assumed the *toga virilis*, the emperor distributed the largesses usual on such occasions, and the customary honours were given him—the office of priest, enrolment among the twenty men, and the function of quaestor, five years before the proper time. Then Tiberius married him to Julia, his own granddaughter, thus paving the way to the succession. No less favour was shown to the younger brother Drusus, when he assumed the manly toga in A.D. 23. Medals were struck with portraits of the young Caesars beside that of Tiberius; and after the death of his only son the emperor commended the two princes to the senate, and besought them to consider them as his own sons. Numerous inscriptions in Italy, in Africa, in Spain, in Greece, testify to the general honour in which the princes were held, and to the general opinion that the succession was assured to them.

But about A.D. 25 a change in the relations between Tiberius and the princes took place. Tacitus would have us believe that this was wholly due to the machinations of Sejanus, who lured them into rash speeches of treasonable nature, which enabled him to represent them to the emperor as engaged in treasonable practices, and so to effect their ruin. But it is not easy to accept this representation; for, though it is quite certain that Tiberius did complain to the senate, after the fall of Sejanus, that the minister had caused the destruction of the two



FIG. 79.—AGRIPPINA MAJOR. Bust in the Mus. Chiaramonti, No. 369.



princes, yet the incarceration of Drusus and the captivity of Agrippina were not relaxed after the death of Sejanus, which would assuredly have been the case had the emperor been satisfied that they were the innocent victims of a false accusation. The third brother, Caius, remained with him at Capreae, and was unmolested.

The explanation of the conduct of Tiberius is far from being intelligible, as reported by Tacitus; indeed, it is an exhibition of unreasonable caprice. If, however, we accept the explanation suggested, it becomes at once intelligible.

That had come to pass which the dying Germanicus had feared. Agrippina had disregarded the last warnings and entreaties of her husband. Her wild passions, her unslaked resentment aroused by an imaginary wrong, her uncontrollable ambition, her pride and incapacity to restrain herself, had brought about the results Germanicus had anticipated. She had plunged not herself only into destruction but also two of her sons and many of her friends. On her barren island she had time to think over the past, to review her own conduct. Her only living son was Caius, the 'Little Boots,' whom she had shown to the soldiers on the Rhine, and who had been their darling. This prince was now declared as the next successor to the throne.

She was in her forty-sixth year—at that period of life when in women latent insanity is certain to break out. There was epilepsy in the family. Her brother Postumus had been a madman; so her son Drusus; and the same disorder threatened her son Caius. It is hard not to see—in the fixed idea of wrong done her by Tiberius, who in everything had sought her good, in her belief in the poisoning of her husband, and that the prince sought to poison her also when he offered her a ripe apple—the evidence of a disordered mind. The outbreaks of ferocity<sup>1</sup> were evidences of wild blood and seething brain. And now at this critical period of her life, when common sense would have told her that her uncle, in his seventy-fifth year, was rapidly failing, and that her own son would succeed him in the absolute sway of the world, she resolved to die. No persuasion would turn her from her purpose, not even force could induce her to swallow the food she had determined not to suffer to pass between her clenched teeth. Tidings of this strange caprice so resolutely pursued were borne to Tiberius, who ordered that she should be made to eat. But the will of the woman was strongest. She could not be made to swallow what was forced into her mouth, and she died, by her own free will.

It need hardly be said that this rejection of food is one form in which the suicidal mania among the insane manifests itself.

Agrippina died on the same day, October 18th, as that on which

<sup>1</sup> The word *ferox*, however, does not imply quite the same as the English derivate, or rather has not always an evil significance. For instance, in Tacit. *Ann.* i. 2, the '*ferocissimi*' are 'the boldest spirits.'

Sejanus had perished two years previously. The emperor ordered this fact to be registered in the state archives, probably desiring thereby to indicate that she had been guilty of treason as black as his. The day of her birth was by order of the senate decreed to be one of ill omen, on which no sentence of court might be pronounced. In the official record of her death it was entered that she had merited execution, but that by favour of the prince she had been spared this disgrace. Tiberius is said by Tacitus to have been base enough to have charged her with a criminal amour with Asinius Gallus. It is probable that the historian has misinterpreted the words of Tiberius, who accused her of too intimate association with Gallus in treasonable plots. Gallus was consul B.C. 8, consequently must have been at least in his 80th year when arrested, and that supposes him to have entered on his consulship at the earliest period he possibly could by law. He was, in fact, old enough to be the father of Agrippina. That she had intended to marry him, was the meaning of the strange scene in her sick-room described by her daughter Agrippina; but she designed to marry him not out of passion, but because he was calculated to serve her ambition, and because she could not have elected a man more distasteful to Tiberius.

The body of Agrippina was burnt on the islet where she died. Five years later her ashes were brought with solemnity to Rome by her son Caligula, and were placed in the imperial mausoleum.

In the courtyard of the palace of the conservators on the Capitoline hill is a white marble chest in the shape of a large die. On one side it has been sculptured with the heraldic insignia of some Italian noble; but on the face remains the inscription—

OSSA  
 AGRIPPINAE · M. AGRIPPA (E · F ·)  
 DIVI · AUG · NEPTIS · VXORI (S)  
 GERMANICI · CAESARIS  
 MATRIS · C. CAESARIS · AVG.  
 GERMANICI · PRINCIPIS.

It is the chest that contained the ashes of this wonderful woman.

‘With Agrippina expired the last hopes of freedom that had flashed thrice before the eyes of the Romans. The glory of love of freedom which had enhaloed Drusus was spread over Germanicus, and from Germanicus it was reflected over Agrippina, but always in feebler light. With Agrippina it was extinguished. But enslaved souls require dreams, and do not care to look reality too fully in the face. To speak the truth plainly, it was unreasonable to expect the restoration of the Republic from the grandchild of Augustus. To give that, she must have done violence to her blood, her origin, and the genius of her destiny. She attempted to deceive no one, she never enveloped her aims in false pretences, she showed her ambition conspicuously.

Sejanus characterised her in two words: "inhiantem dominationi"—panting after rule.<sup>1</sup> Clear-seeing Romans knew this and made no stir in her favour. They reckoned, at all events, on her virtues. But who can say, but that this imperial Cornelia would have proved herself unworthy of respect had she gained power? Who will assert that her sons would not turn out worse than Tiberius? Why should Nero and Drusus have become corrupt less readily than Caligula? Finally, Agrippina, be it remembered, was the daughter of one Julia and sister of another, both infamous for their dissolute lives. Had she gained supreme power, there were three dangerous elements in her that would have run riot: impetuosity, pride, and her natural temperament. Her impetuosity was such that it could not be controlled even in the face of danger. Her pride was never subdued. Her temperament was kept within bounds because she was exposed to the pressure of public opinion, and all the power she had she owed to the respect with which her moral purity inspired the citizens. She possessed in her nature those elements which, though under restraint, through the necessity she was in of imposing on the multitude, might, and probably would, have shot up, and bloomed in rankness, in the unwholesome sphere of supreme domination. Agrippina loved too dearly the sweetness of power to be able to resist its allurements and dangers.<sup>2</sup>

### XIII.—THE LAST YEARS OF TIBERIUS.

WITH the advance of age and infirmities, away from Rome, the emperor was unable to exercise a restraining hand on the judicial disorders in the capital. Perhaps he was unwilling. He had lost all his old and faithful friends; he had become estranged from, and then lost his mother; the man whom he had almost associated with himself in the government had dealt him the most deadly of blows; the intrigues of Agrippina and her sons had alienated him from the remaining members of his house; his daughter-in-law, who had lived under his roof since the death of Drusus, he had been forced to expel when he discovered that she had been implicated in the murder of her husband; Caius Caligula, who was his companion, he saw was one unsuited to reign; and he trembled for the fate of his grandson, Gemellus, when he caught the malignant glance of the heir to the throne resting on the little boy. His best ministers were dead. Piso, prefect of the city; Cocceius Nerva, his trusty minister of justice; the noble-hearted Marcus Lepidus, the counsellor 'without fear and without reproach,' as Tacitus designates him; the gallant soldier, Poppaeus Sabinus, who for twenty-four years

<sup>1</sup> And Tacitus: 'Aequi impatiens, dominandi avida, virilibus curis feminarum vitia exuerat.'

<sup>2</sup> Beulé, *Le Sang de Germanicus*. Paris, 1869.



FIG. 80.—TIBERIUS. Statue found at Veii, in the Vatican.



had ruled the provinces—all were dead; and the confidence he had had in selecting able and honourable men was broken. The only member of his family in whom he had any comfort was the aged Antonia, that admirable and blameless woman, the widow of his brother Drusus and mother of Germanicus, whom he visited occasionally in her villa at Tusculum, some fourteen miles from Rome; but the city itself he never re-entered, and when he sought her, or his Janiculan villa, he travelled by bye-roads to avoid the annoyance of being an object of attention and obsequiousness.

One object of his visits to Antonia was the arrangement of marriages for her granddaughters. His former policy had been to weave together into one interest the Julian and the Claudian houses; for that purpose he had married the sister of Germanicus to his only son, Drusus; and Julia, the only daughter of his son, he had given to Nero, the son of Germanicus and Agrippina. In this he had pursued the policy of Augustus. But it had failed signally, and now he followed another course. To the great indignation of the Roman aristocracy, he gave his granddaughter Julia, the widow of Nero, to Rubellius Blandus,<sup>1</sup> 'whose grandfather,' says Tacitus, 'was remembered by many to have been only a Roman knight from Tibur.' Drusilla, second daughter of Agrippina, he gave to L. Cassius Longinus, who had been consul in A.D. 30, a member of a distinguished plebeian family. Julia Livia, the third daughter, he married to Marcus Vinicius, an amiable and worthy man, a native of Cales, in Campania, and of no social or political importance in Rome. The old emperor seems in the choice of husbands for the three princesses to have looked out for men of good character and ability, in no way mixed up with the factions of the capital.

According to Roman law, the wife took the position of her husband and not that which was hers by birth. Consequently, Tiberius hoped by these unions to withdraw the female members of the two families from rivalry with the males, of whom now there were but three in addition to himself—Caius, Claudius, and Tiberius Gemellus.

Towards the provinces Tiberius pursued the same admirable policy that he had initiated. The incessant change in the governors had occasioned great suffering to the provincials. He appointed as proconsuls and procurators men who were of tried probity, and maintained them in their places for life. 'It was part of the policy of Tiberius,' says Tacitus, under the date A.D. 15, 'to continue persons in offices, and for the most part to retain them in the same military authority, or in the same civil employments, to the end of their lives; with what view is not agreed.' Then follows a string of malevolent insinuations,

<sup>1</sup> Rubellius Blandus was the only man who voted for mercy in the trial of Lutorius, when Lepidus proposed the commutation of his sentence to banishment; that was in A.D. 21. Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 51.

so characteristic of Tacitus. 'Some think that he did it to save himself trouble, so he made a permanent job of what he had done once; others think that he did it out of malevolence, to prevent many aspirants from reaping the benefits of office. Some also believed that he was irresolute and muddle-headed as he was cunning, and did it because he could not resolve what alteration to make.' That his policy was dictated by humanity to the provincials, and that it was one strongly recommended by the example of the great Caesar, Tacitus does not suggest. Anyhow, this was the system Tiberius never swerved from throughout his reign, and the result was that well-being, order, and tranquillity reigned in all the provinces of the empire.

Another feature in the policy of Tiberius deserves notice. He had himself undertaken expeditions in Lower Germany beyond the Rhine, and had learned their arduousness and unprofitableness. Reluctantly he had suffered Germanicus to prosecute the scheme of thrusting the frontier forward from the Rhine to the Elbe; but when Germanicus had lost two armies, and Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul were drained of men, and the treasury was exhausted, without prospect of compensating advantages, Tiberius bade Germanicus withdraw, and thenceforth resisted every inducement to extend the bounds of the empire. The result was the consolidation of the possessions that Rome then had. The important province of Gaul rose under the rule of Tiberius to a condition of prosperity hitherto impossible. The Roman stations on the Rhine and Danube, no longer starting-points for ravaging parties, became centres of trade throughout Northern Europe, centres whence radiated civilisation. By prudent treatment, under men of integrity, Tiberius succeeded in consolidating the unwieldy mass of the empire and organising its government on equable principles.

'The amount of freedom and security enjoyed by the Jews under a Quirinius and a Pilate shows the general leniency of the Roman government at this period. The warm descriptions of provincial felicity by the Jewish authority Philo may be coloured to suit a purpose. Yet indications are not wanting in the writings of the Evangelists—which contain, abstracted from their religious significance, the most interesting record in existence of the social condition of antiquity, for they alone of all our ancient documents are the productions of men of the people—to show that the mass of the population of Judaea was contented and comparatively happy under the rule of the Roman procurator. The Scribe and the Pharisee are held up to odium or contempt, not the minister of police or the instrument of government. The Romans are regarded in them as the protectors of the people against their domestic tyrants. The duty of paying them tribute is urged as the proper price of the tranquillity they maintain; their fiscal officers are spoken of with forbearance; the soldiers are cited as examples of thoughtful toleration; the vice of the provincial ruler is indifference and unbelief rather than

wanton violence ; and the tribunal of the emperor himself is appealed to as the last resort of injured innocence.’<sup>1</sup>

It was the same on the Rhine. There Lentulus Gaetulicus was governor of Gaul and Germany, and he won what was difficult—simultaneously the hearts of the soldiers and of the provincials—by his inflexible justice combined with suavity of manner.<sup>2</sup> Inevitably he was attacked by a delator after the fall of Sejanus, for he had designed to marry a son of that great minister to his daughter. He could not return to Rome to answer the charge, and so he wrote to Tiberius. He said : ‘I have never violated my allegiance ; I shall continue firm in it, if no plots are formed against me. If a successor be appointed to take my place, I shall regard it as my death-warrant. Let me retain my province and the prince enjoy the empire.’ They were bold, frank words, and the senate were aghast at the temerity of the honourable man. But this frankness pleased Tiberius, and the impeachment was stopped.

In Rome there was a sudden recrudescence of accusations and executions three years after the fall of Sejanus, the reason for which is not given us. Tacitus paints us a terrible picture of the scenes in Rome, but does not explain what produced them. He says that ‘Tiberius ordered all who were in prison under accusation of attachment to Sejanus to be put to death. There lay the countless mass of slain, of every age and sex, the illustrious and the mean ; some dispersed, others collected in heaps. Nor was it permitted to their friends or kindred to be present, or to shed a tear over them, or any longer even to go and see them ; but guards were placed around, who marked signs of sorrow in each, and attended the putrid bodies till they were dragged to the Tiber ; where, floating on the stream, or driven upon the banks, none dared to burn them, none to touch them.’<sup>3</sup> Suetonius tells the same story, without accounting for this outbreak. He says : ‘Not a day passed without the punishment of some person or other. Of many who were condemned, their wives and children shared the same fate ; and for those who were condemned to death the relations were forbidden to put on mourning. Considerable rewards were voted to the prosecutors, and sometimes to the witnesses also. The information of any person, without exception, was taken ; and all offences were capital, even speaking a few words, though without any ill intention. Some who were thrown into prison were not only denied the solace of study, but debarred all company and conversation. Many persons, when summoned to trial, stabbed themselves at home, to avoid the distress and ignominy of a public condemnation, which they were certain would ensue. Others took poison in the senate-house’ (these *others*, by the way, resolve themselves into one man, whose case Tacitus narrates). ‘The wounds were bound up, and all who had not expired were carried, half-dead and panting for life, to prison. Those who were

A.U.C. 784.  
A.D. 31.  
—Act. 72.

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, v. p. 421.

<sup>2</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* v. 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 19.

put to death were thrown down the Gemonian stairs, and then dragged into the Tiber. In one day twenty were treated in this manner, and amongst them women and boys.'

Now, it is remarkable that of this massacre Tacitus speaks vaguely, and gives no names of any of the victims, contrary to his usual practice. We do not know whether the victims were tried in the senate or in the ordinary courts; we do not know who were their accusers, or what the crimes charged to them, any more than who these victims were. It would seem as though Tacitus were summing up all the executions of a whole year, perhaps of more, into one picturesque passage to produce a startling effect. Suetonius obviously exaggerates, and he does not pretend to do other than group into one chapter the executions spread over several years.

In the reign of William and Mary was published an anonymous work entitled *The Bloody Assize*, which purported to give a true account of the proceedings of Judge Jeffreys in the West, after the rebellion of Monmouth. Lord Macaulay, without much examination, adopted the statements of this work into his popular History, and rouses the indignation of his readers against the barbarous cruelty of the judge and the king with whose permission he acted, and their compassion for the victims, whose number is variously reckoned as between 320 to 700. Recently Mr. Inderwick has published some strictures on both *The Bloody Assize* and Lord Macaulay's narrative of Judge Jeffreys' conduct; and as the most effectual answer to the accusations made against the judge, he prints the gaol-deliveries of that assize, which should completely reverse the popular estimate of the judge.

Now, we cannot altogether control the statements of Tacitus and Suetonius by the production of the gaol-delivery in Rome at this period; but we can give the record of trials and sentences Tacitus has furnished us with; and though this record shows that a good deal of blood flowed, yet it by no means proves to us that the amount was, for the times, enormous, nor that Tiberius was responsible for it. Of one thing we may be quite certain, that he has given us every case which could directly or indirectly be attributed to Tiberius.<sup>1</sup>

The method of Tacitus is this:—

He asserts that Tiberius inaugurated an era of atrocious tyranny and a reign of bloodshed. Then he proceeds to give particulars. He collects all the trials for murder, for scandalous abuse of office, for slander, for adultery, and charges the unhappy prince with the suicides, banishments, and executions that were the consequence. In ten out of twelve of these cases there can be little doubt that the accused were guilty, but, because they were nobles, Tacitus thinks they should have been allowed to go scot-free. Moreover, most of the trials were due to private jealousies and spite among the senators, or to the growth of the

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II., *Tacitus and Tiberius*.



hateful delatorship which had become a profession. Unless Tiberius interfered to hold the senators from flying at each other's throats, and stopped all delation, Tacitus considers him guilty of the miseries due to the social condition and to the abuse of the delatorial system.

Suetonius is less scrupulous than Tacitus, he takes a single case and multiplies it into many. One singular instance of his method deserves quotation. Seneca tells us to what an extent the wretched scoundrels who lived upon delation carried their audacity. At a banquet, a slave seeing that his master was becoming intoxicated, and observing that one of these professional accusers was at the table, drew from his master's finger his signet-ring on which was engraved the head of the prince. Afterwards, when the man was very drunk, the delator went round among the guests to obtain their written testimony that this tipsy nobleman had treated the portrait of Tiberius with coarse indignity. But the slave at this juncture stepped forward, opened his palm, and displayed the ring. There was accordingly no prosecution. Suetonius, however, had heard this story and he worked it up into his biography of Tiberius in this fashion. 'It was a capital crime to carry the prince's head stamped upon the coin or cut in the stone of a ring to a necessary place.' Again Suetonius says, 'He was guilty of many barbarous acts, under pretence of strictness and reformation of manners.' When we look into the list of trials, we find that those coming in any way under this head were the stopping of the Oscan farces, and banishment of the actors, because of gross indecency, and of riots they had provoked in which lives had been lost. The praetors had complained repeatedly and in vain to the senate, till Tiberius interfered to stop the scandal, to the great disgust of the baser sort. To interfere with the gross and demoralising amusements of the people was counted as a 'barbarous act.' He also interfered in a case of adultery, and in cases of ill-treatment of provincials, and of a judge taking bribes, to prevent the guilty getting off too easily. And as the culprits were nobles, his intervention was regarded as 'barbarous.'

Suetonius says, 'Not a day passed, not excepting holidays, without punishment of some person or other.' The highest number of trials was in A.D. 32, when there were twenty-four trials, and then there were but five executions. So far from it being true that punishments took place on holidays, we learn that Tiberius was incensed when trials were gone on with on such days. If there were executions on festivals, it was when he was away in Capreae. The one shocking case of the execution of the little daughter of Sejanus, Suetonius magnifies into many. He also charges it as a crime against Tiberius that 'those who were desirous to die were forced to live'—that he ordered food to be thrust into the mouth of Agrippina when she tried to starve herself, and that he sat with his friend Cocceius Nerva, who had resolved on suicide, and entreated him not to prosecute his intention.

Some years later, when Caius was on the throne, the mood came on him to tell the senate the plain truth about the executions in the preceding reign. He read out the names of all who had fallen, one by one, and told the senate that the guilt of the deaths rested on them, not on Tiberius, for it was they, he said, who had been the accusers, the false witnesses, and the judges who had pronounced sentence. With ruthless frankness he read out all the particulars from the official documents. 'You behaved,' said he, 'like madmen. You it was who first puffed up Sejanus by your inordinate flatteries, and then ruined him.'

#### XIV.—THE POLICY OF TIBERIUS.

THE Roman Constitution, as Mommsen tells us, was an arch in which the king was the keystone. The keystone had been knocked out, and the constitution had gone to pieces. Julius Caesar had endeavoured to reconstruct it. Augustus had succeeded in doing so. The keystone was back in its place. But neither Caesar nor Augustus desired to make of the Roman state a despotic autocracy. No more did Tiberius. He claimed to be prince of the senate. 'Conscript fathers,' said he once to the senate, 'I have often said, both now and at other times, that a good and useful prince, whom you have invested with absolute power, should be the servant of the senate, of the whole body of the people, and often of individuals as well. I am not sorry I said it.'

His plan, set before himself from the outset, was that of keeping in his hands the reins of the government of the provinces, not, however, independently of the senate, and of relinquishing to the senate the internal management. He loyally held to this course as long as possible, but the people, 'ready for slavery,' would thrust on him work of which he desired to be relieved, and the senate proved incompetent, or unworthy of the trust reposed in it.

The times were monarchically inclined. Tiberius refused the title of Emperor in the sense in which it had been borne by Augustus. He refused that of 'Father of his Fatherland,' repeatedly urged on him. He refused to be entitled 'Lord' (*Dominus*). 'I am lord,' said he, 'over slaves only, emperor only over soldiers; I am but first (*princeps*) among my fellow-citizens.' He would use the name of Augustus, that had legally descended to him, in his letters to foreign potentates only. 'He did not carry himself much above the level of a private person; and of the many honours offered him he accepted but few, and such as were very moderate. He forbade temples and priests to be appointed for him, as likewise the erection of any statues of himself, without his permission, and such he allowed only on condition that they were used ornamentally, and not placed among the images of the gods. He held

flattery in such aversion that he would never suffer a senator to approach his litter as he traversed the streets, either on business or to pay him a civility. And when a man of consular rank, in begging his pardon for some offence he had given him, attempted to throw himself at his feet, he started back in such haste that he stumbled and fell. If a compliment were paid him in conversation or in a set speech, he would interrupt and reprimand the speaker and bid him alter his expression. Being once called "lord" by some one or other, he desired that he might never more be so affronted. When another, to excite veneration, called his occupations "sacred," and a third had used the expression, "By your authority I have waited on the senate," he obliged them to change their phrases, in one of them adopting "persuasion" instead of "authority," in the other "laborious" in place of "sacred."

If, towards the end of his reign, circumstances compelled Tiberius to act somewhat despotically, it was due to the senate alone, not to any change in his design. 'Such was the pestilential character of the times,' says Tacitus, 'so contaminated by adulation, that not only the chief nobles, but consulars and such as had been praetors, and even many of the inferior senators, strove to surpass each other in the fulsomeness and extravagance of their proposals. It is said that Tiberius as often as he left the senate would exclaim, "O men, fitted for slavery" (*O homines ad servitutem parati*).'

That he was in earnest in his endeavours to restore the legislative power to the senate, and to reserve to himself only the position of president of a republic as far as Italy and Rome were concerned, appears from his conduct throughout. Tacitus says of the ninth year of his government—

'All the public, and even private, business of moment was managed by the senate: to the leading members was allowed liberty of debate; those who fell into flattery, he himself checked. In conferring preferments he was guided by merit, by ancient nobility, renown in war, and distinguished civil accomplishments, insomuch that it was agreed that none had better claims (than those he advanced to positions of trust). The consuls and praetors retained the usual distinctions of their offices; inferior magistrates the exercise of their authority; and the laws, except those for treason, were beneficially administered. The tithes, taxes, all public moneys, were managed by companies of Roman knights; the management of his own estates he committed only to men of eminent probity, and to some known to him only by their reputation. When once engaged, they were retained in office without any restriction of term; and most of them grew grey in the same employments. The people were indeed distressed by dearth of provisions, but through no fault of the prince: nay, he spared no possible expense and pains to remedy the effects of barrenness in the earth or storms at sea. He took care that the provinces should not be oppressed

with new impositions; and that the existing burdens should not be rendered intolerable by rapacity or severity in the magistrates. Corporal punishments and the confiscation of goods were unknown. Caesar's lands in Italy were small, and thinly scattered; the behaviour of his slaves modest; the freedmen in his house few; his disputes with private individuals determined by the courts and the law.'<sup>1</sup> Tacitus pretends that there was a change in his government after this year, not all at once, but gradual. We may ask, in what particulars? Certainly there was none in his management of foreign affairs. Tacitus means in his relation to the home government. Suetonius says something of the same sort of thing. 'He assumed the sovereignty (*principatus*) by slow degrees, and exercised it for a long time with great variety of conduct, though generally with a due regard to the public good. At first he only interposed to prevent ill management. Accordingly, he rescinded some decrees of the senate;<sup>2</sup> and when the magistrates sat for the administration of justice he frequently offered his services as assessor, either taking his place promiscuously among them or seating himself in a corner of the tribunal. Should a rumour reach him that such and such a person under prosecution was likely to be acquitted because he was in favour with himself, he would suddenly appear in court, and from the floor, or from the praetor's bench, remind the judges of the sanctity of the laws and their oaths, and of the nature of the charge brought before them.'<sup>3</sup>

The senate consisted of about five hundred members, most of whom had served in some official capacity. They were no longer all Romans by birth, but there were many admitted from the most distinguished citizens of municipal towns and colonies. The emperor, the consuls, the praetors, and the tribunes of the people, all exercised the right of convoking the senate. At the ordinary sessions the emperor presided only when he was consul, at the extraordinary meetings the consul or praetor who had summoned it. The senate exercised authority over a wide sphere. It controlled the public treasury, and had assumed the power to try and punish its own members and their retainers. It was therefore a privileged court, as one of peers. It claimed as well to be a judicial court in all cases of treason, and in all charges of maladministration of provinces and misappropriation of funds. The legislative power, formerly possessed by the assemblies of the people, had been practically transferred to the senate, and the appointment of many of the public offices was in its hand. The senate also dealt with all cases relative to public worship. Tacitus gives an instance in which several Greeks were tried before it on a charge of having paid divine honours to their grandfather, who had not been authoritatively canonised. The senate elected

Tacit. *Ann.* iv. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Exercising, as he was justified by law, his power of veto.

<sup>3</sup> Suet. *Tiber.* 33.



to the colleges of priests, ordered religious festivals, and saw to the building of temples. It ordered triumphs to generals, and even to princes of the imperial house.

In all these particulars concerning internal government, Tiberius left the senate free to act, and he even strengthened and enlarged its powers.<sup>1</sup> But the senate was constantly endeavouring to shift upon him those duties which were likely to be attended by disfavour. A case in point was a sumptuary law proposed by the aediles. The object was to restrain the luxury of the wealthy, or rather this was the apparent object; it was brought forward very much as a bit of display of zeal for ancient simplicity, to catch the approval of the unreflecting rabble. The senate, instead of passing or rejecting the law, referred it to Tiberius, and fortunately Tacitus has preserved his letter thereon, which exhibits in a strong degree the calm good sense of the emperor, as well as lays bare the manner in which the senate endeavoured to throw on him the blame of all the stupid things they did. Tiberius began by saying that it would have been more suitable had the law been proposed in regular form in the senate and he had been called on to express his opinion there as one among many; then he added that before introducing this law, if the aediles had consulted him, he would have advised them to have nothing to do with the attempt to restrain luxury. 'For where is the limit to be fixed?' he asked. 'What is to be prohibited? Extensive country seats? a multitude of servants drawn from various countries? pictures, statues, works of art? or vestments worn by men and women? Or where is the line to be drawn in ladies' decoration? in precious stones?' Then he goes on gravely to point out that already many sumptuary laws had been passed and had failed in their object; then to show that the old simplicity in which the ancient Romans lived was agreeable to the then condition of society, but that now Rome was an empire with commerce over the seas to foreign lands, and that, consequently, foreign articles must find their way into the houses of the Roman citizens. To attend to the encouragement of commerce 'is a duty, conscript fathers, that devolves on the prince. If it be neglected, ruin to the state will ensue.' Then he strikes at once at the true nature of the proposed law: the aediles sought popular applause when introducing their measure, and wished to leave to the emperor the task of seeing that it was carried out. The conclusion of his letter is too fine to be omitted. 'If any magistrate, confident in his own strictness of principle and energy, will undertake to stem the progress of the evil, he has my ready praise, and my acknowledgment that he is relieving me of a good portion of my burden; but if these men seek merely to declaim against abuses, and, when they have gained applause by so doing, to leave to me the odium of carrying out their measures, then, conscript fathers, I

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tiber.* 3.

beg you will believe my word when I say that I am not fond of giving offence. I am willing to encounter heavy, and for the most part unmerited, hatred, for the good of the commonwealth, but I deprecate saddling myself with such laws as are uncalled for and superfluous, and which can do no possible good to me or to yourselves.'<sup>1</sup>

On another occasion, Caecina Severus brought forward a bill to forbid a magistrate taking his wife with him when he entered on the government of his province. He argued, what was true enough, that the wives egged on their husbands to oppress the people, and formed cliques and stirred up quarrels. This brought Drusus, son of Tiberius, to his feet. 'I myself have made a progress to Illyricum. I would not have done so contentedly if I had been torn from my wife, who is most dear to me, and by whom I have so many children.' The matter was referred to the emperor, and at the next session the senate received a letter from him indirectly rebuking it 'for casting upon him all the public cares.'<sup>2</sup>

The behaviour of Tiberius towards the senate was prudent and moderate. He did not object to an open and honest expression of opinion contrary to his own, and not infrequently found himself in a minority.<sup>3</sup> Investigations into criminal charges, even when the cases were brought before himself, he referred to the senate. Poor and worthy senators, unable by their loss of means to maintain their position, and ashamed to appear in the senate-house, he assisted with grants of money. If they were in debt, he saw that the money went to satisfy their creditors. Unworthy members of the house, notorious for their scandalous living, he expelled from it.

In all outer forms he showed a deference that was almost exaggerated, and would have been mere hypocrisy unless we take him at his word, that he desired the senate to be his constitutional fellow-helper in the government of the State. 'He never entered the senate-house but unattended; and being once brought there in a litter, because he was indisposed, he dismissed his attendants at the door. When some decrees were passed contrary to his opinion, he made no complaint. When he proposed to the senate that the Trebians, who had some money left them by a will to build a new theatre, might be empowered instead to spend the money in making a road, he could not prevail on the assembly to set aside the direction of the testator. And when, upon a division of the house, he went over to the minority, nobody followed him. . . It was observed that he would rise in his place when the consuls approached, and give them the way. He reprimanded consulars in command of armies for not writing to the senate an account of their proceedings, and consulting him instead. He attended the corpses of some persons of distinction to the funeral pile. He displayed the same moderation with regard to persons and

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 53, 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 34.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 51.

things of inferior positions. To some governors, who advised him to load the provinces with taxes, he answered: "It is the part of a good shepherd to shear, not to flay, his sheep."

The older Tiberius grew, the more repugnant to him was the adulation of the nobles, never put to the blush by rebuff. He knew that these men who bowed and scraped to him would, if they dared, have torn him with their teeth, to use the expression of Dio. It was inexplicable to the demoralised Roman that he turned with disgust from flattery, and Tacitus thinks it displayed an abject spirit in him that he sternly refused divine honours.

He withdrew from the capital and from the senate in despair of both, and if delation and executions and suicides multiplied after he was in Capreae, it was because he was not present to interfere between the victims and their judges. He was almost pedantic in the strictness with which he held to law, and he may have suffered in some cases law to take its course when the result was injustice. But how great a stickler, he was for legality appears in his conduct towards Decius Silanus, who had debauched Julia, granddaughter of Augustus, daughter of his own wife, Julia. When the conduct of Julia had come to the ears of Augustus, he had forbidden him his house, and refused him his friendship. Thereupon Silanus retired into exile. Afterwards, in A.D. 20, his brother, Marcus Silanus, pleaded with Tiberius for his recall. The emperor at once replied that Decius was at liberty to return, as he had not been banished by a decree of the senate, nor by any law. Accordingly Decius did return. Tiberius refused to admit the man to his house and friendship, and he remained excluded from all honours, but quite unmolested.

The retirement of Tiberius to Capreae was a token of weakness, of abandonment of a design he had formed when in full vigour of manhood; but it is excusable: he was, as Tacitus says, 'nauseated at the crouching tameness of these slaves;' he had met with disappointment in his social and political schemes of regeneration for the Roman people, and in his own household he had encountered naught save sorrow. He was weary of a struggle that led to nothing—the motive for work was gone. He could not look to founding a dynasty, nor to inspiring old institutions with new life. It is hardly in the nature of any man to struggle on without hope of some sort to animate him. He had no confidence in Caligula: he was sure the young tiger would murder his grandchild, the only representative remaining of his race, young Tiberius Gemellus. The tears came into his eyes one day as he caught Caligula looking at his cousin, and he said, 'Thou wilt kill him some day, and another will slay thee.'<sup>1</sup> He knew the character of the man who was to succeed him. 'You will have all the vices of Sulla, and none of his greatness,' said he once. The old man endeavoured to soften and

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 46.

brighten the gloomy and hard nature of the young man by encouraging him to pursue music and dancing, but it was in vain.

The picture of Tiberius, as presented to us by Tacitus and by Suetonius, is one full of contradictions. It shows us a man who did the noblest but also the foulest acts. It can be a true picture only if we suppose that he who was a great and good man became deranged, and yet, even that supposition is not to be reconciled with the even and wise manner in which he directed the foreign policy. If we allow that Tacitus and Suetonius have suffered themselves to be misled into attributing to him the crimes committed by the senate, and into perverting the significance of many of his acts, then we obtain a perfectly intelligible and explicable record of a man of noble aspirations, tender heart, sincere desire to do his duty, pursuing his course in the midst of every discouragement, dogged by slander and misapprehension of his purpose at every step, till he sank under years and infirmity, when all the evil that had festered in the rotten social and political system came to a head, and all the pains and fevers it produced were charged upon him by those who were in reality to blame. That is a consistent picture, the other is not. It is true that there are incongruities in every man's conduct, but surely not such as are represented as having existed in that of Tiberius. We may allow that a man never wholly fulfils his ideal, falls miserably short of it, but such a monster as Tacitus paints for us is an impossibility. The dislike the nobility felt for him was deepened by the dislike with which he turned from them. 'He remained unmoved at all the aspersion, scandalous reports and lampoons that were spread against him and his relations, declaring that in a free state tongue and mind ought to be free. Upon the senate's desiring that some notice should be taken of these offences, and the persons circulating them, "We have not much spare time," said he, "and so need not involve ourselves in additional business. If you meddle with that, every one will be bringing up his private quarrels before you."' There is also on record another unassuming saying of his in the senate, 'If one speaks ill of me, I shall take good care to behave in such a manner as to be able to give a good account of my words and acts, and so confound him. If he still persists, why then I shall think it is my turn to hate him.'<sup>1</sup>

Suetonius quotes some anonymous verses written against the prince. Tiberius had them read to him. He knew who they were who wrote, or, at all events, passed these lines round from hand to hand. 'Let them hate me, so long as they do but approve my conduct'—*Oderint dum probent*, said he sadly, at each fresh exhibition of the rancour with which those 'impatient under the discipline of reformation,' attacked him.<sup>2</sup>

That these libels pained him Tacitus tells us: 'He was exasperated by the publication of satirical verses written by unknown authors, ex-

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Tiber.* 28.

*Ibid.* 59.



posing his cruelty, his pride, his dissensions with his mother,' but he never revenged them. In the tenth year of his reign he pardoned the Roman knight Cominius, who was prosecuted on this charge. Once, as we have already heard, stung to the quick by these insulting and gross attacks on his character, he declared that he would have the truth or falsehood sifted out in public, but he abandoned the intention when he became cool. The consul Fufius, a man of caustic wit, had been 'used to play upon Tiberius with cutting pleasantries,' which he produced before Livia, and which she also circulated after her quarrel with her son; but Tiberius took no more notice of these than by an allusion in a letter to the senate of the mischief done by old ladies encouraging men to hang about them.

As late as A.D. 35, two years before the death of Tiberius, Fulcinius Trio, who had been a creature of Sejanus, having been attacked by a number of informers, committed suicide, but, before doing so, gratified his malignity by inserting in his will a string of abuse of the emperor. The heirs were so alarmed that they would have suppressed the will, but Tiberius, on being informed of the circumstance, bade them not hesitate to publish it. Among other things Trio had written that the emperor 'was reduced to a condition of mental imbecility from old age,' and sneered at his retirement in Capreae as a sort of disgraceful exile. But Tiberius complained of a good many of the scandalous stories circulated, though he never had the authors punished; and it was by this means as already said, that the libels were preserved in the records, and it was thence that the writers of half a century later drew their material for representing Tiberius in so bad a light.

How eagerly and uncritically stories were taken up and believed, if they served to deepen the colours of the painting, may be instanced from Dio.

He says that an architect came to Rome who successfully set up-right a public edifice that was leaning. Instead of being rewarded for what he had done, Tiberius banished him. But, unable to accept his banishment, he came to Capreae to plead his case with the emperor, and in the interview held a glass vessel in his hand; this he purposely let fall, and it was broken. He picked it up, squeezed together the broken edges, and, lo, the glass was made whole as before! Thereupon Tiberius ordered him to immediate execution!—a folk-tale told everywhere, and at all times. It is told also of Nero, and is true of neither. How this story originated we find from Pliny the Elder, who says that in the reign of Tiberius a sort of flexible glass was invented, but as it was thought that this discovery would injure the trade of the manufacturers of vessels in bronze and other metals, the workshop of the ductile glass-makers was closed and the manufacture stopped. This was clearly done by order of the senate. The blame of stopping the manufacture was transferred to the emperor and a cock-and-bull story added.

If we accept the stories of Suetonius and Tacitus of the dissolute morals of Tiberius in his old age, then we must suppose that he was deranged. That is an easy method of reconciling the contradictions of the historians. But before accepting these stories we may well ask for some better evidence than Roman gossip and lampoon, and there is no other on which the historian and the biographer based their charges. And, before pronouncing Tiberius to have been insane, we must have better grounds to go on than the desire to save the reputation of Tacitus and his jackal. There was derangement in the Julian, not in the Claudian stock.

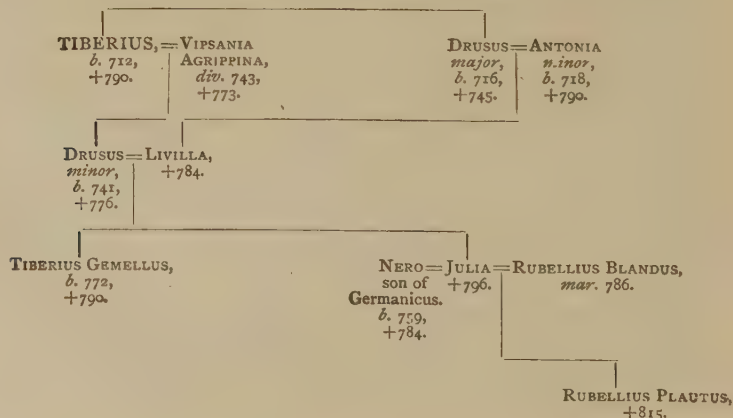
#### XV.—THE DEATH OF TIBERIUS.

THE health of the emperor was failing rapidly, and in Rome the senatorial party were eagerly awaiting the news of his death. Already Macro and others of his attendants were labouring to in-

A.U.C. 790.  
A.D. 37.  
Act. 78.

gratiate themselves with Caligula, and were somewhat remiss in their attentions to the feeble old man. 'I see,' said he, 'venerating the rising, and turning your backs on the setting sun.'

Feeling his end approach, he made an effort to visit once more the aged Antonia at Tusculum; she was the grandmother of Caligula, and he had doubtless many matters he desired to communicate to her. On his way back to Capreae he fell sick at Astura, not far from Antium, and was feverish. Recovering somewhat, he pursued his journey to Circeii. Accustomed to great self-control, on his way he attended festivities inaugurated in his honour, and even flung a dart from his lodge at a boar let loose in the arena. Soon after, however, he was worse, suffered from an attack of colic, and as a bitter March wind was



blowing, and he was bathed in a cold perspiration, he was forced to retire and take to his bed. He was able, however, to get as far as Misenum, and refused to alter his ordinary way of life, and even occupied his usual place at table. It was his habit after dinner to stand, and with a courteous speech to say farewell to each of his guests in order. Though very ill, he insisted on doing this as was his wont, 'his dissimulation not failing him,' is the characteristic sneer of Tacitus. 'He



FIG. 81.—TIBERIUS, as Pontifex Maximus. Bust found at Capri, in the British Museum.<sup>1</sup>

exhibited the same inflexibility of mind, the same energy in his looks and discourse; and even sometimes by affected vivacity tried to hide his decaying strength, though too manifest for concealment.'

'Charicles, his physician, as if departing to attend to his own affairs, took hold of his hand under pretence of leaving, and in doing this felt his pulse. But Tiberius detected what he was about, and at once

<sup>1</sup> The nose of this bust has been badly restored with some yellow material and given an absurd shape. The aquiline form would be accentuated by age.

returned to table and continued the entertainment; whether incensed, and endeavouring to conceal his displeasure, is uncertain.' He probably knew what use Charicles would make of his observation. The physician, in fact, rushed off to Macro to inform him that the old man's life was fast ebbing away. The news was spread through the whole court, 'And all was bustle and consultation, and expresses sent flying to the generals and armies.'

He retired to his room, feeling weak and exhausted, and bade Evodius, the most confidential of his freedmen, bring his two grandchildren to him betimes the next morning, that he might address them before he died. After having given this direction, he prayed the gods to make known to him by some token which of the two they destined to succeed him. For the old man's mind was perplexed, knowing the evil nature and crazed head of the elder of the princes, and knowing also how impossible it would be for the boy Gemellus to maintain himself at the head of affairs. Accordingly he asked that the sign of the will of the gods should be that he who was called to empire should first enter his room.

Then, so goes the tale, in his anxiety to control, if possible, the decree of the gods, he bade the tutor of Gemellus make sure and bring his charge to him as early as possible. But the younger boy, dawdling over his meal, was forestalled by Caligula, who first entered the room of the dying man. Tiberius received the token with a sad heart, and said to Caius, 'My son, although Tiberius (Gemellus) is nearer to myself than you are, yet both of my own choice, and in obedience to the gods, I commend the empire of Rome into your hands.' Then he earnestly adjured the truculent lad to love his young and unprotected kinsman, and enforced his words by a solemn warning of the perils of the position to which he was about to be raised, and the punishments which the gods send on the ungrateful.<sup>1</sup>

It was the desire of the dying man to be carried to his peaceful island home, but unfavourable weather, and his rapid failure of power, rendered this impossible. The day was the 16th of March, and Tiberius was in his seventy-ninth year.

After this interview with the boys he fainted, and a whisper ran through the villa in which he was that the emperor had ceased to breathe. The courtiers rushed along the corridors to find and congratulate Caligula, who at once issued from his chamber to seize on the ensigns of power. Then came a second report: the sick man had recovered, and was calling to his attendants for nourishment. The consternation was universal; the courtiers scattered like chaff, the expression on their faces altering instantaneously. Caius himself stood for a moment speechless, in expectation of immediate punishment. It was the scene in Henry iv. enacted centuries before. The old emperor

<sup>1</sup> Joseph, *Ant. Jud.* xviii. 6-9.



took off his signet-ring and held it for a little while, as if about to present it to Caius, but hesitated, then replaced it on his finger, and lay for a while motionless, with hands clenched, in thought. Then suddenly he called for his attendants, and not receiving an immediate answer, raised himself with a last effort, and fell lifeless on the floor beside his bed. This is the account of Seneca, a contemporary. But, according to Tacitus, on the recovery of the dying man from a fainting fit, Macro whispered to Caius, 'Heap more bedclothes on him and leave him.' Suetonius mentions the report that he was murdered, and adds an additional touch of horror. Caius tried to get the signet off the dying man's hand, but as Tiberius kept his fingers clenched he threw a pillow over his face, and with one hand clutched the old man's throat and held it till he expired. He ordered a freedman, who had seen what he did, to be crucified.<sup>1</sup>

Side by side in the Louvre are two pieces of statuary, the one a bust of Tiberius, the other a statue of Livia as Ceres, and the resemblance between mother and son must strike the most cursory observer. From her he derived his beauty, and only second to him in this particular, as Valerius says, was his brother Drusus. He was tall and splendidly proportioned, broad-breasted and broad-shouldered. A defect he had, if it be a defect, he was left-handed, and consequently his left hand was a little larger than his right. 'His joints were so strong that he could bore a sound apple through with his finger, and take a piece of flesh off the head of a boy or young man with a fillip. He was of a fair complexion, and wore his hair long behind, so that it covered his neck, which was observed to be a distinguishing mark affected by his family. He had a handsome face, but it was often covered with pimples. His eyes, which were very large, had a remarkable faculty of seeing in the night-time, for a short while only, and immediately on awakening out of sleep; but they soon grew dim again. He walked with his neck stiff and upright, generally with a frowning countenance, and, for the most part, in silence.' The frown was no doubt caused by his eyes being unable to bear a strong light. 'When he spoke to those around him it was very slowly, and usually accompanied with a slight gesture of the fingers. All which being disagreeable habits and tokens of arrogance' (or supposed to be so) 'were remarked by Augustus, who repeatedly excused them as best he could to the senate and people as natural defects, not proceeding from viciousness of mind.'<sup>2</sup>

The elder Pliny also speaks about the peculiarity of the vision of Tiberius. He says, 'This Caesar alone among all men had the faculty of seeing for a few moments after waking in the night, as clearly as by day, but soon after all grew dark again.'<sup>3</sup> The Emperor Julian, in his satire on the former emperors, mentions the outward appearance of

<sup>1</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 12.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Tiber.* 48.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Nat.* xi. 37.

Tiberius as that of a man whose face was full of grave dignity, revealing the thinker and the soldier.

'In comparing the portraits of Augustus and Tiberius,' says M. Mayor, 'we observe essential differences. The skull of Tiberius is squarer. The expression is less false, less cunning (*fin*), but much more powerful. The width between the parietal bones—great in Augustus—is enormous in Tiberius. The nose is larger, stronger in structure, more blunted. The jaw is more powerful, more salient. The ears heavier and more projecting. The chin well marked, with a dent.'

There remain over forty statues and busts of Tiberius, and we are able to form a very tolerable conception of the appearance of the emperor when in his prime of vigour and beauty. They all show us a singularly broad brow, lofty, the forehead advancing. The nose is finely moulded and thin, well bridged; the face wide at the cheek-bones, but thence rapidly narrowing to a small chin. The mouth is refined and beautiful, drawn back between the nose and projecting chin. The skull is flat, or with a very low arch, and in this it is as different as possible from the head of Julius Caesar. The flatness of the skull is sometimes disguised by the hair being heaped up on the top, or by a civic crown. The width in the head of Caesar was between the ears; that in Tiberius is between the temples. The brows are not arched, but straight, except in early youth. There was no attempt made by the artists to Graecise the face of Tiberius, which diverges widely from the Greek type of beauty. He was represented in the fulness of manhood long after he had begun to be old, but no attempt was made to rectify the angles of his face and to straighten his nose into line with the brow. The lower lip retreats, and is small. There is no projection of the upper lip. Indeed, the breadth of brow, the rapid narrowing to the small chin, and the peculiar mouth, are the three characteristics of the head of Tiberius that distinguish it.

Looking at the busts, as a physiognomist, one is impressed with the lack in the balance of the parts. The intellectual capacity is very great, but the small mouth and small chin indicate feebleness of purpose and over-sensitiveness. The lower part of the face is moulded like that of a nervous woman. There is in it the same indication of high culture as we saw in that of Julius Caesar. Of coarseness, of sensuality, of cruelty, there is not a trace. The lips are full of the expression of kindliness, but the kindliness is restrained by timidity. 'About the delicate mouth plays a smile of superiority, whilst, perhaps, hard thoughts slumber under the brows,' is the opinion of Bernoulli, which I do not quite share; but he adds: 'The preponderating expression in the face is one of nobility, far removed from indicating such a character as Tacitus described.' That is true. And what if the Taciteian picture be a monstrous misrepresentation? Then we have a face and head in strict harmony with

the Tiberius that has been described in these pages from the reluctant admissions of his detractors.

In his bodily health Tiberius was sound, though in his youth there was a slight delicacy, which made Augustus and Livia anxious about him in his military campaigns. But strict dieting and regularity of life enabled him to overcome this weakness. He placed no confidence in doctors, and he was wont to say, 'Those are poor creatures who, after having passed their thirtieth year, need other advice than their own experience to tell them what is good and what is bad for their own health.'

The pride which so many believed they saw in his manner—he showed no pride in his conduct—was due to his natural shyness. How many at the present day are thus harshly and unwarrantably judged! Timidity and reserve are easily misread. His awkwardness of holding himself and of address was due to the same cause; in youth he was reprimanded for it, and what must have hurt him greatly, heard his adoptive father apologise to the senate for it. There can be no question but that his wife Julia cast it insultingly in his teeth. He was at his ease only among students and philosophers, or in a camp. He never associated with ladies after his separation from Vipsania. The only exception to this was his visits of the worthy Antonia, whom he ever loved and respected for her virtues. But these visits were unfrequent. Perhaps he mistrusted women; he had certainly cause to do so. Precisely this want of other companions than men prevented him from acquiring ease. In the house of Augustus he knew that he was watched with suspicion; even in exile he knew that spies surrounded him. When he became emperor, he knew that all he said and all he did were turned into mockery and cruelly perverted. He was driven to shut up his own thoughts and sorrows in his own heart. But this sense of being ever the observed with intent to take occasion against him increased his awkwardness. The nervousness that characterised him was perhaps due or due in part to the events of his earliest infancy, when as a babe in arms he was hurried from one hiding-place to another, now concealed in a bush, then carried through the flames of a burning forest. Thus he may have sucked in a sense of fear at his mother's breast. The flutter of the heart to which he clung may have permanently thrilled his nerves at an age when the infant is hardly an individuality apart from its mother. It was something of the same in the case of James I. of England, and VI. of Scotland.

From Pliny we obtain a number of details about the diet of Tiberius; how he liked to have a cucumber on his table at every meal, and how his gardener had a sort of glass-covered hot-bed on wheels for the cucumbers, that was rolled into the sun; how he relished a vegetable which, from the description, must be taken as Brussels-sprouts, and a sort of parsnip from Germany, and a plant like an asparagus. Pliny was fourteen years old when Tiberius died, and it is remarkable

that he who tells us so much of the cruelties of Nero says nothing of those of Tiberius. He calls him 'the saddest of men' (*tristissimus ut constat hominum*), and an emperor devoid of sociability (*minime comis*). Once does he speak of him as cruel, and that in reference to his old age. 'Novellius Torquatus of Milan,' says he, 'who was advanced to be praetor and proconsul for his worth, was called a ten-bottle man, from his having emptied three *congii* of wine in the presence of, and to the great astonishment of, the Caesar Tiberius, who in his old age was severe, even cruel (*in senectâ jam severo, atque saevo alias*), but who in his youth was fond of his bottle. And it is supposed that Lucius Piso obtained of him his office of praefect of Rome from having stuck at table two days and two nights with the prince when he had already come to the empire. And it was the talk that Drusus Caesar resembled his father in nothing more than in being a hard drinker.' It will be noticed that Pliny speaks of these things as reports only. Seneca in his eighty-third letter probably gives us the explanation of this story when he says that Tiberius did not withdraw his confidence from worthy statesmen, even though they were given to the pleasures of the bottle; and the men he mentions in connection with this are the same Lucius Piso whom Tacitus speaks highly of for his uprightness, and Cornelius Cossus, the successor of Piso, of whom Seneca testifies so much that he never let slip any private or state secret when he was drinking.

The story, however, in itself is a chronological impossibility. It is one of those in which we can bring our authors to book, and convict them of falsehood. Seneca merely mentions that Piso had a habit of drinking. Pliny tells the tale as a bit of gossip. In Suetonius it has become an undoubted fact. Pliny says that Tiberius, when already prince, spent thirty-six hours in a continuous drinking-bout with L. Piso and Pomponius Flaccus, both of whom he rewarded for their prowess at the table, one with the province of Syria, the other with the praefecture of the city, straight off (*confestim*). But Piso at his death in A.D. 32 had been, Tacitus tells us, twenty years praefect of the city, so that he owed his advancement to Augustus, and not to Tiberius. And Flaccus cannot have been appointed to Syria before A.D. 32, which makes the story absurd—that the prince rewarded the man then for a debauch which had taken place fifteen years before.

It was in reference to the love of good wine by Tiberius in his youth that the wags called him Biberius Mero; but he certainly broke himself of a habit that was never allowed to get the mastery over him, and in his old age he drank only Sorrentine wine, which he said was but a better sort of vinegar (*generosum acetum*), and which Caligula said was good wine turned sour (*nobilem vappam*).

In diet he was frugal, and had food that had not been consumed on one day served up for dinner on the next. Once when half a boar was placed on table, and his guests tittered and looked at each other;



'Why not?' asked Tiberius, 'surely half a boar is as good eating as a whole one.' He read his son Drusus a lecture because he turned up his nose at a dish of cabbage served at table. A present of an unusually large barbel was given him one day. 'It is too much of a dainty for me,' said Tiberius, and sent it to the market saying, 'If I am not out in my reckoning, either Apicius or Octavius will have it.' Both gourmands bid for the fish, and the latter secured it for a sum equal to £50. His love of vegetable diet he inherited from his mother. Of grapes he liked best an African kind that was hung up in smoke through the winter.

As he was moderate in diet so was he in the decoration of his apartments. He possessed, however, a choice table of citron wood, such as it was a hobby of men to possess at that period, and ladies were wont to joke their husbands with the taunt that what jewels were to the fair sex that citron-wood tables and good furniture were to men. But Nomius, the freedman of the emperor, boasted himself of having a much handsomer table than his master.

He took a fancy to the statue of an athlete cleaning his right arm with a scraper, by Lysippus, of which a copy is now in the Vatican, and which stood in the public baths of Agrippa. He removed it to his own palace; but when the people murmured, and clamoured in the theatre for their beloved Apoxyomenos, he sent it back again.

I will close this account with the words of Adolf Stahr, which seem to me as true as they are beautiful:—

'It was in his own family that misfortune first struck him, and afterwards pursued him through life. History shows us no sovereign who was so unhappy in his domestic relations as was Tiberius. Even as a boy he was placed in a difficult position, by the separation of his parents, and by his adoption into the imperial family, where he was regarded as an unwelcome intruder, and was surrounded by the dislike and exposed to the disrespect of the privileged members. His first happy marriage was violently broken, that a woman might be forced on him who brought shame and dishonour on his head. After this marriage was at an end he remained from his thirty-fifth year to the end of his days unmarried and alone. His only brother, whom he tenderly loved, the handsome, heroic Drusus, was taken from him by death. So also his only son, and he had to learn that the wife of this son had been his murderess, and further that the daughter of this son likewise betrayed her husband to Sejanus. His kinsfolk of the Julian branch, Agrippina and her sons, paid him with black ingratitude for all the care he took for them, and the unhappy old man had good cause when considering them, in more than one particular to liken himself to Priam.<sup>1</sup> The treachery of Sejanus finally filled up the picture of measureless misfortune and sorrow which is revealed to us when we

<sup>1</sup> He would often say, 'Happy Priam, who survived all his children.'—Suet. *Tiber.* 62.

consider this life, and which at moments drew from the restrained heart of the great sufferer a cry of despair, of doubt in gods and men. If the gloomy earnestness of his temper was intensified finally into contempt for mankind, the only wonder is that this took place so late.

‘And yet one hope remained to him in the midst of the general misapprehension with which he was regarded, and that was—that futurity would judge him aright. “He cared far less,” says Tacitus, “to please the generation in which he lived, than to stand well with posterity.” Indeed, he spoke his hopes himself. “I would have posterity remember my acts. Posterity will do justice to my memory.” His hope remained unfulfilled for eighteen centuries.’

In the galleries of Rome, of Naples, Florence, Paris, one sees the beautiful face of Tiberius, with that intellectual brow and sensitive mouth, looking pleadingly at the passer-by, as though seeking for some who would unlock the secret of his story and vindicate his much aspersed memory.

#### XVI.—PORTRAITS OF TIBERIUS.

**MEDALS.**—1. A large bronze, struck at Lyons, A.D. 10, when Tiberius was aged fifty-one years; he is, however, represented as younger than this, and unshorn, probably in token of grief for the destruction of Varus and his legions the preceding year.

2. and 3. Medium bronzes, struck A.D. 34 and 36.

**GEMS.**—1. Paste. The heads of Tiberius and his mother, he with a laurel crown, and Livia crowned with corn and poppy heads. An admirable portrait, No. 158, Florence. (*Frontispiece*, Fig. 71.)

2. Two other gems, both good, of Tiberius, with wreath, Nos. 161 and 162. (Nos. 160 and 163, also Tiberius, are unimportant. All these at Florence.)

3. Good head on a gem, at Naples, No. 206.

4. Fine youthful head, with laurel crown, at Alnwick Castle.

**STATUES.**—1. Seated figure, from Veii, in the Vatican (Chiaramonti, No. 400) perfect all but the fingers of the left hand with the sword. The head, crowned with oak leaves, belongs to the trunk. Found in 1811. (Fig. 80.)

2. Seated figure, from Piperno, found in 1795. Uncrowned; the head never separated from the trunk; nose restored, and chin and underlip patched. (Chiaramonti, No. 494.)

3. Seated colossal figure, from the theatre at Cervetri, now in the Lateran. Head and torso found in the same place. Nose restored. (Fig. 69.)

4. Statue in toga, in the Pal. Colonna. The back of the head

restored; mouth not so drawn in as in most portraits. Nose and brow unmistakable.

5. Colossal statue at Naples, in chlamys, and with sword in the left hand.

6. Statue in toga, in the Louvre, found at Capri; torso and head were found separate. Tiberius at a ripe age, chin and tip of nose new.

7. Heroic statue in Leyden.

BUSTS.—1. Youthful head in the Capitoline Museum, aged about 20-25, a fine bust. (Fig. 58.)

2. Elderly head, 50-55, of red and white alabaster. According to Winckelmann, one of the best in the collection. (Fig. 78.)

3. Colossal head, from Veii, found in 1811. Tiberius as a young man. The mouth drawn a little to the left. Wanting in individuality. Chiaramonti, No. 399.

4. Head, larger than life, in the Villa Borghese, No. 10. Youthful; the retreating mouth and projecting chin somewhat exaggerated.

5. Colossal head, representing the emperor at an advanced age, with wrinkled brow; nose new. Found at Pozzuoli, Naples.

6. Head on bust in armour, age about 35; the face calm and dignified. From the Farnese Collection, Naples. (Fig. 76.)

7. Youthful head, labelled the Younger Drusus, in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence. The bust in toga is modern (No. 57).

8. Youthful head resembling 6, in the Louvre, No. 329, on modern bust in armour.

9. Bust from the Villa Albani, in the Louvre, No. 309. A very characteristic head, evidently from life. In the opinion of Mr. C. Dressler, one of first-class excellence. (Fig. 61.)

10. Head, larger than life, with oak-leaf crown from Gabii. Only the point of the nose new. Perhaps idealised and exaggerated, but very fine. Clearly not from life, the shape of the back part of the head is wrong. Though not taken from the living man sitting to be modelled, it is by some artist who had seen and been impressed by the characteristic features of the emperor's face, and of his expression when listening. Louvre, No. 682. (Fig. 62.)

11. Bronze head, with silvered eyes, in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, found at Mahon in 1759, youthful.

12. Bust in the museum at Madrid, of Tiberius as a young man.

13. Colossal bust, found at Paestum, not particularly good; at the same time was found a head of Livia, in the same collection, Madrid.

14. Youthful head, in the British Museum, wrongly labelled as the Younger Drusus, No. 7. (Fig. 59.)

15. A characteristic half-head in the British Museum.

16. Tiberius in extreme old age, with veil as Pontifex Maximus; found at Capri. I have no hesitation whatever in saying it is intended for Tiberius, and I am perplexed and surprised that Bernoulli should

doubt it. Shape of skull, breadth of brow, mouth, chin, are all certainly those of Tiberius. A very interesting bust. The nose has been abominably 'restored,' and gives a false character to the face. (Fig. 81.)

17. Good bust in Wilton House, resembling that in the Capitoline Museum (No. 4), not idealised.

18. Good youthful bust in Woburn Abbey.

19. Youthful head of Tiberius, aged 20, at Berlin; bought in Naples 1842. The bust is modern. The tip of the nose is new. (Fig. 60.)

20. Bust in the Glyptothek, Munich, No. 236. Tiberius in full vigour of manhood, perhaps a little idealised. The mouth not drawn back.

21. Head in the Museum at Stockholm.

22. Head from Lamia, in the Museum at Athens.



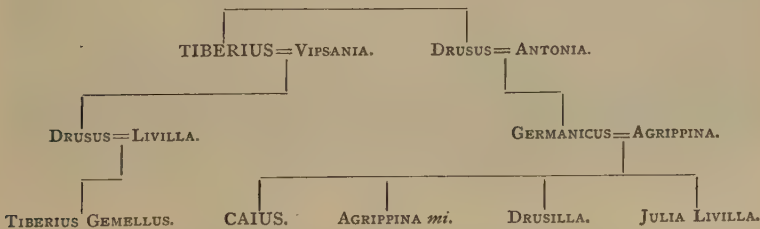
# CAIUS (CALIGULA).

## I.—EARLY YEARS.

THE story of Caius is that of a madman. In him that vein of insanity which was noticed in Agrippa Postumus, and in Drusus, the second son of Agrippina, became patent to all the world. He was even conscious of it himself.<sup>1</sup>

Our materials for a life of Caius are not abundant, nor can we select among them, and distinguish misrepresentation of facts and exaggeration as we can in the case of Tiberius, for, unhappily, the books of the Annals of Tacitus that dealt with the reign of Caius have been lost. Four entire books are lost, from the seventh to the tenth, containing the record of the transactions of less than ten years, a larger space proportionally than had been accorded to the details of the administration of Tiberius. We are thrown accordingly for the history of this period on the dry narrative of Dio, and on the gossip of Suetonius.

Caius Caesar, the youngest son of Germanicus and Agrippina, was born 31st August, in the year A.D. 12, apparently at Antium. An elder brother of the same name had died early, and this led to some confusion among historians as to his birthplace, some mistaking the place of nativity of the elder Caius for that of the younger, who alone survived, but Suetonius took pains to arrive at the facts from the public records. He spent his childhood in the camp on the Moselle and the Rhine,



<sup>1</sup> Tacitus speaks of his disturbed mind, 'turbata mens,' 'turbidus animi.' So does Seneca, and Suetonius tells us that Caligula was conscious of his own disordered mental condition.

where he received the nickname of Caligula, or 'Little Boots,' from the soldiers, who were gratified to see the child trot about in military stout sandal, with laces above the ankle. In the year A.D. 17, he accompanied his father and mother on the Syrian expedition. He was seven years old when Germanicus died; and after that he lived under



FIG. 82.—CAIUS. Bust in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

the supervision of his mother, and on her arrest, in the home of the old empress-mother, Livia, and then with his grandmother Antonia. These ladies either did not know how to manage him, or found him too much for them; he seems to have run wild in their houses, and lived in a

very disorderly manner. In his twenty-first year he assumed the manly toga and shaved. Tiberius on that occasion did not make the largesses to the people of Rome that he had on the occasion when Nero and Drusus attained their majority.

Probably on account of the annoyance he caused his grandmother by his misconduct, but also certainly to withdraw him from proximity to Rome and the chance of cabals being formed about him, Tiberius removed him to Capreae, and there he remained till A.D. 37, when he ascended the throne, when aged not quite 25. His constitution was weakly. In his childhood he had been subject to epileptic fits, and though he outgrew this tendency, he remained liable to sudden faintings. Early indulgence of his every appetite had fatigued and enervated both his physical powers and his brain, so that his condition when not that of absolute insanity was one that hovered on the verge, and occasionally passed into sheer madness.

Unhappily for him, at Capreae he had been the companion of the Idumaeen, Herod Agrippa, who was twice his age.

‘Intelligent and active, and well versed in men and affairs, Herod soon acquired unbounded ascendancy over the young prince, now trembling in the uncertainty of his own fortunes, and oscillating between the brightest hopes of power and the direst apprehensions. To Caius such a friend and mentor as the Jewish chief was invaluable. With Agrippa he passed the hours he could steal from the exacting jealousy of his uncle; from him he learnt the customs of the East and the simple machinery of Asiatic despotism, and imbibed a contemptuous disgust at the empty forms of the Republic, which served only, as he might in his blind inexperience imagine, to impede the march of government, while they contributed nothing to its security.’<sup>1</sup>

Caius lacked that education for the throne which had been given to his father, to Tiberius, and to Octavius. They had been trained in the camp to discipline themselves and to command others. They had attended the senate, and had pleaded before it. But Caius was held back from every form of public life, and then suddenly found himself possessed of absolute power. The transition was enough to make an ordinary head turn giddy.

There is, in the Torlonia collection at Rome, a very beautiful statue of Caius as a boy, it is of Greek workmanship, the face is fresh and innocent, and without that shadow that stole over it and obscured it, that turn of the neck so characteristic of the twist in the brain that marks all the later portraits. The beautiful Otricoli statue in the Vatican (Pio Clementino, No. 262) is not of Caligula, as determined by Visconti, but of Augustus. But the fact of there being any doubt as to whether a portrait belongs to Octavius or to Caligula indicates the fact that there was a family resemblance between them. The identi-

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *Hist. Rom.* vi. 6.

fication, however, of the portraits of this emperor presents, as we shall see presently, very considerable difficulties.

Philo the Jew tells us that he heard in Rome, on trustworthy authority, that Tiberius, had he lived longer, would have got rid of Caius, so as to secure the throne to Tiberius Gemellus, as he had reason to suspect the sinister mind of Caligula, 'who was full of evil will towards the whole Claudian family and considered only his mother's, the Julian, stock.' He says that Macro persuaded the old emperor that the character of Caius was not so malicious as he supposed, and that more than once Macro acted as the protector of the young prince. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, was born in the year that Tiberius died, and he has preserved to us an interesting incident relative to the friendship of Agrippa and Caius.

Herod stood high in favour with Antonia, and she often helped him in his pecuniary embarrassments. He lived in Rome, but was frequently at Tusculum, where he contracted a not disinterested friendship with Caligula, whom he believed to be destined for the empire.

One day when he and Caius were driving out together, he said to his companion that he hoped it would not be long before 'the old fellow died,' and then Caius would attain the object of his ambition. 'As for Tiberius Gemellus,' said the Jewish prince, 'he is easily got rid of.' This conversation was overheard by the charioteer, and when, some time after, the man was arrested for theft, he begged to be brought before the emperor, as he had a matter of importance to communicate to him. He was accordingly conveyed to Capreae and there kept in chains. Herod Agrippa was uneasy, and once when Tiberius was on a visit at Antonia's villa in Tusculum, he appeared before the prince and urged that the case might be gone into at once. But the 'old procrastinator' declined. He said: 'Let Agrippa be at his ease. If his servant tells lies, then his imprisonment serves him right. If he spoke the truth, then the consequence, when established, might be very unpleasant to Agrippa.'

Herod was not content, and urged Antonia to use her influence. Accordingly, one day, after the meal at noon, when Tiberius and the old lady were having a little turn together in a litter, she attacked him on the subject, and would not be satisfied till he promised to investigate the matter at once. He did so, and was so satisfied that the charioteer spoke the truth, that he ordered the arrest of Herod. Agrippa remained under guard till the death of Tiberius, but he was treated with great indulgence, allowed to receive his friends, and enjoy all the amenities of life, as the centurion in charge of him received instructions so to do from Antonia and Macro.

One day a trusty servant, the freedman Marsyas, brought the imprisoned prince the desired tidings, just as he was on his way to the



bath. He whispered into his ear in Hebrew, 'The Lion is dead.' The centurion on guard, who guessed from the haste of the messenger and the beaming face of the prince that the tidings were important, insisted on being informed what had been said. Agrippa told him that Tiberius was dead, and ordered a great supper and wine, and invited his guards to feast with him.

But whilst they were seated at table there arrived another message to say that the first news was false. The centurion, frightened to death, at once placed Herod in chains. A day or two later, the decease of the emperor was confirmed, and with it came the announcement of the succession of Caius to the throne. The new emperor's first act was to set his friend at liberty, but he was unable formally to liberate him till after the funeral of Tiberius, as his grandmother told him 'it was against all decency to discharge the prisoners of the late emperor before he was laid at rest.' To make amends for his imprisonment, Caius conferred the diadem on Herod and nominated him to be king of a portion of Judaea. It is probable that Josephus got this story from Thaumastor, a page of Caligula, who passed into the service of Herod Agrippa, went with him to Judaea, and became his major-domo, an office he retained, after the death of Herod, with his children.

The announcement of the emperor's death was communicated to the senate in a letter from Caius, the bearer of which was Macro. At the same time the testament of the late Caesar was presented to them. Caius informed the conscript fathers that he desired every posthumous honour that had been given to Augustus should be likewise and in full measure accorded to Tiberius, but he requested that the dying prince's disposition—the division of his patrimony, of his rights to the throne between Caius and Gemellus—should be annulled as the act of an incapable dotard. The will was accordingly set aside, a public funeral was appointed, and the functions and dignities of empire were heaped on Caius alone.

A. U. C. 790.  
A. D. 37.  
Aet. 25.

He then set forth from Campania with the body of Tiberius. 'Upon his moving from Misenum, although he was in mourning, and following the corpse, he had to walk amidst altars, victims, and flaming torches, with prodigious crowds of people everywhere attending him, in transports of joy, calling him, in addition to other auspicious names, by such titles as these: "their star," "their chick," "their pretty puppet," and "bantling."'

Immediately after the funeral of Tiberius followed another, to which filial piety called him. He at once started, though in a gale of wind, for the islands where had died his mother and eldest brother, to bring thence their ashes. 'He approached their remains with profound veneration, and deposited them in their urns with his own hands. Having brought them with great solemnity to Ostia, with an ensign flying at the stern of the galley, and thence up the Tiber to Rome,

they were borne by persons of the first distinction in the equestrian order, on two biers, into the mausoleum (of Augustus) at noon.'

The setting aside of the will of Tiberius had been demanded solely in order that the coequal rights of Gemellus might be annulled. Caius fulfilled every other particular of the will scrupulously; he moreover executed all the last bequests of Livia, whose testament Tiberius had set aside.

Then, entering the senate-house, he addressed the conscript fathers in terms full of respect and diffidence. He declared himself the ward of the senators, and invited them to assist him and relieve him of the toils of government, and to advise him as to the direction he should take. Then, thinking that the setting aside of the young Tiberius might occasion uneasiness, he pointed out that the boy was only in his eighteenth year, and not yet arrived at the legal period which would permit him to enter the senate, and he solemnly assured all who heard him that he would be a careful guardian to the lad.

## II.—THE FIRST MONTHS.

CAIUS issued a general pardon to all such as were in prison, and recalled those who were banished. He produced a large bundle of papers, which he informed the senate contained the depositions relative to the trial and sentence of his mother and brothers, and burnt them in public, with the solemn assurance that he had not looked into them, and did not know the names of those who had informed, or given evidence against them. As, however, at a later period he pursued all who had been engaged in these prosecutions with relentless severity, it was believed that he had burned other papers, or had provided himself with copies before he destroyed the original transactions. When a paper was presented to him that purported to contain information relative to a plot contrived against himself, Caius refused to receive it, alleging that as he had wronged nobody it was impossible for him to believe that any man had conspired against him. He proscribed the most infamous ministers to the vice that corroded Roman society, and, unless restrained by his advisers, would have put them all to death by drowning.

At the beginning of the month of July Caius accepted the consulship, and associated with himself his uncle Claudius. The obsequious senate had desired, immediately on his accession, to turn out of office one or both of the existing consuls, Proculus and Nigrinus, and to nominate him to a perpetual consulship, but he declined, and waited for his election till the term of those occupying the office was accomplished. On the day when Caius assumed the insignia of the consulship, he made a speech to the senate, so full of assurances of his liberal

intentions, and of promise for the future, that they ordered it to be annually recited in public.

On August 21st, which was his birthday, he gave magnificent games, inaugurated with the hitherto unheard-of luxury of cushions on the benches for the senators. This was the beginning of a system of conferring amusements on the people that became almost continuous throughout the year, and cost the treasury enormous sums, whilst they wearied the people with their over-frequency.

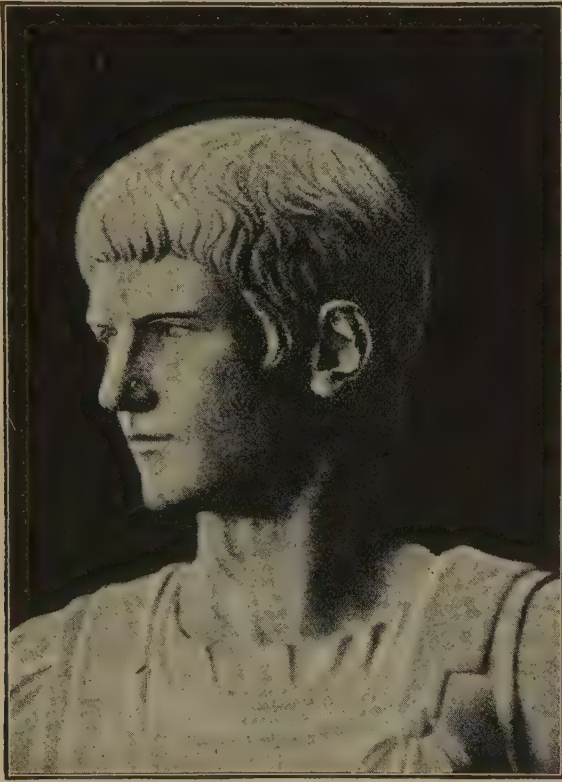


FIG. 83.—CAIUS. Basalt Bust, Capitoline Museum.

In the first year of his reign, Caius refused to permit any statues to be erected in his honour, especially such as represented him with the attributes of a god.

We have no reason to suppose that the unfortunate young prince was playing the part of a conscious hypocrite all the while; yet this is what probably would have been the representation of Tacitus in the last books of his History, for in that which relates to his residence at

Capreae with Tiberius he prepares the way by describing him as an arch-dissembler; in boyhood, disguising his feelings at the death of his mother and brothers, and accommodating his humour to that of the emperor, with a cunning beyond his years. We may believe that the expedition to Pandateria to fetch the ashes of his mother, and the stately funeral of mother and brother, were prompted by genuine piety to their memory, and so also his association of his sisters with himself in honour (he made the senate swear to honour them as they honoured himself) was an extravagant expression of sincere family affection. We may allow that the tears he shed when pronouncing the panegyric over the body of Tiberius were produced by real feeling. He must have felt some regard for the old man who had treated him with such care and kindness, unless we suppose that he was the monster he is represented, destitute of genuine good feeling. His conduct during the first eight months of his reign rather shows us a rise of his better nature, a sincere wish to stand well with all classes, to bury past wrongs in oblivion, and inaugurate a period of happiness. The late emperor had been unpopular, not because of his cruelties, as Tacitus would have us believe, but because he disliked and kept aloof from the bloody scenes in the arena, and the indecent exhibitions in the theatre. He was not a genial man, and the mob was ever ready to excuse faults in their princes if they had *bonhomie*. This, we are told, was the case with Drusus, son of Tiberius. His father reproved him for his love of bloodshed in the amphitheatre, and his excesses at table were well known. Yet the people said: 'Let him employ his days in shows, and his nights in banqueting; that is better than solitude and seclusion from pleasure.'<sup>1</sup>

Caius knew the temper of the people and indulged it; but as he lacked discretion, he did not know when and where to stop, and he glutted the populace to surfeit with shows.

At the end of October the young emperor fell dangerously ill, and as up to this time the Romans had found only happiness under his government, the condition of his health caused lively alarm. Crowds spent the night outside the doors of the palace, expecting tidings of a change in his condition. Some made vows to the gods that they would fight among the gladiators if he recovered, others besought the gods to accept their lives in place of that of their beloved sovereign.

At this point it will not be amiss to say something on the mental condition of Caius.

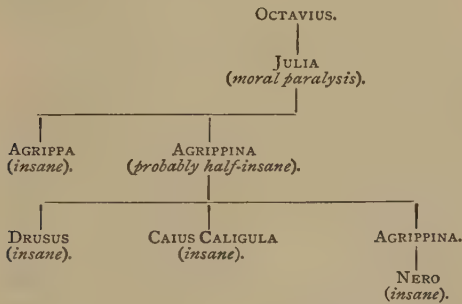
He was subject to epileptic fits: epilepsy was in the family. Julius Caesar had it; he had two fits when engaged in war, but that was all. Many great men have had them occasionally, but when they occur frequently they lead to softening of the brain. There are two forms of epilepsy, the *grand mal* and the *petit mal*. In the former there are

<sup>1</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* iii. 37.



convulsions, in the latter momentary loss of consciousness without convulsive movements. In a bad fit of the former the muscular power is often excessive; the body is bent forwards or drawn backwards with great force; the eyes roll furiously; the lips are convulsed, and covered with a frothy saliva. When the attacks are frequent, the distortion of the facial muscles becomes fixed, the patient grinds his teeth, makes grimaces, the lips become puffed, the face flabby, and the look of intelligence disappears from the eyes. The afflicted person becomes subject to the wildest caprices and paroxysms of anger without apparent cause. The final condition is idiocy.

Now, Caius we know suffered both from the worst attack of this disorder, as well as from the less serious; and there can be little question that the sickness mentioned by the historians, but not, unfortunately, described by them, was a violent attack of epileptic fits, which, when they passed, left Caius in a measure deranged. Surely this table speaks for itself:—



On his recovery, the altars smoked with victims, the streets rang with joy, and the Jews shared, we are assured, in the general satisfaction. But the satisfaction was destined to be of short duration. Whatever his malady was, the prince rose from it very much changed, if not in disposition, at all events in conduct. If hitherto he had worn a mask, with convalescence he cast it aside; if for a period of a few months he had rejoiced in the favour of the people, and had striven to retain it, he now found a pleasure in striking awe into their hearts, and in dissipating every particle of the affection he had inspired.

He began to suffer from want of sleep; he seldom obtained more than three or four hours' rest in the night, and then could not sleep soundly, as he was disturbed with frightful dreams, fancying that old Ocean conversed with him in roaring tones. Unable to lie quiet when sleep forsook him, he would sit up in bed a prey to wild fancies, schemes, and terrors, or ramble about the porticoes of the palace, looking out for the approach of day.

## III.—THE TYRANT.

ALMOST from the moment that he arose from his sick-bed, Caius behaved in a manner the reverse of his previous conduct. Some of his actions were certainly those of a madman, but he had intervals of sense, though he never again returned to the amiable mood of the first stage of his imperial career. To describe in a few words the change that took

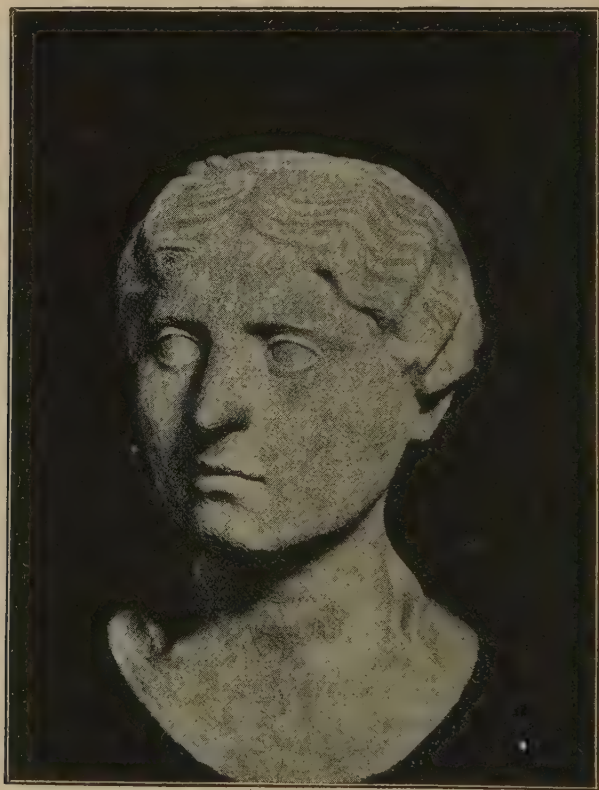


FIG. 84.—ANTONIA. Bust, Museum Chiaramonti, No. 701.

place in him, Suetonius says that at first he acted as a prince, afterwards as a monster.

At the time of his sickness he had drawn up his will, in which he constituted his second sister, Drusilla, to whom he was devotedly attached, heiress of his property and of the empire. He snatched her away from her husband and associated her with himself in a manner that gave rise to scandal. She had been united to Cassius Longinus by Tiberius, but Caius, apparently after his sickness, divorced her from

Longinus and married her to a creature of his own, M. Lepidus, and then took her from Lepidus and startled even dissolute Rome by the declaration that he proposed marrying her. This relation—even in Rome, not squeamish as to moral scandals—was regarded as one crying out to heaven for vengeance.

In the general indignation which found voice, both the person of the prince and the whole imperial house were placed in danger; and, as formerly Octavia and Livia had made their influence felt in all matters concerning the family welfare, so now did the aged Antonia feel herself called on to interfere in the interests of the throne. At the time when Sejanus was meditating a *coup de main* she had sent warning to Tiberius of his danger; and when her grandson succeeded, she did not forget her duty as a guardian. On this occasion we cannot doubt that she interfered to remonstrate with the young prince. It is to this interference, almost certainly, that certain passages refer in the biography of Caius by Suetonius. When one day she warned her grandson not to think that he had now no superior over him, he answered contemptuously: 'Everything is lawful to me, and I may do as I will to any one.' When she entreated for a private conference, he refused to speak with her except in the presence of Macro, the praefect of the guard. Moreover, he threw into prison the Jew, Alexander Lysimachus, her steward, who had been a tried friend to her son, Germanicus, his own father.

When, not long after, Antonia died, all signs of honour were discarded at the funeral, and Caius contemplated from the window of his dining-hall with indifference the pile on which her body was burnt. It was not surprising that rumours circulated that he had forced his grandmother to commit suicide, or that he had had her poisoned. In all probability the old and virtuous lady's heart was broken by disappointment.

The Pharaohs of Egypt from a remote past had married their sisters. The divine royal race was too sacred to mate with one that was of a baser origin. The great Jupiter had taken as consort his own sister Juno,—such an union became a heavenly race; and Caius was inflated with the notion that the Julian family was divine, and must follow the divine precedents. It might condescend to love below its order, but must mate in it.

On medals and on cameos, the heads of Caius and Drusilla appeared together; and it is probable that he would have carried his daring purpose into effect, and have openly married her. But his mad purpose was frustrated.

The unhappy girl fell ill, with shame may be, and died. Caius was plunged in a frenzy of despair. He gave orders that a public funeral of extravagant splendour should be decreed to her, and then insisted that she should be deified and worshipped with temple, statues, and

sacrifices. But he did not attend the funeral himself, he declared himself incapable of controlling his feelings and distracted his mind by rushing away to Alba, and there devoting himself in his country villa to the most trifling amusements. Livius Geminius, a senator, obligingly professed that he had seen Drusilla ascend into heaven, attended by all the gods, whereupon he was rewarded with a million sesterces; and Caius declared that his divine sister should bear thenceforth the name of Panthea (the All-goddess), and be worshipped with like honours to those offered to Venus the Ancestress. The citizens hardly knew how to conduct themselves to suit the fancy of the crazy sovereign. It was impiety to mourn the apotheosis, and it was death not to mourn the dead. Several citizens suffered capitally for entertaining a relative or a guest, or for indulging in a bath, on the days that followed the funeral.

A. U. C. 791.  
A. D. 38.  
Act. 26.

Unable to find rest in his Alban villa, the mad prince roved through the cities of Italy and Sicily, and let his hair and beard grow in token of sorrow. He would thenceforth swear by no other oath than 'the divinity of Drusilla.'

Drusilla was not much, if at all, over the age of twenty when she died. That numerous statues of the new goddess were erected throughout Italy, there can be no doubt—one of gold was set up in the forum—but it is hard, if not impossible, to identify them among the female busts of that epoch. It is very probable that of the many supposed to represent Agrippina the Younger, her sister, one or two of the most youthful may really be the portraits of this unhappy girl. There is, however, one in the Torlonia Museum supposed, with some probability, to be Drusilla, for it bears on it a decided look of the family, a likeness to her brother, and yet it certainly is not Agrippina.<sup>1</sup>

On the day on which the young Tiberius entered on his nineteenth year, Caius adopted him, and he assumed the toga of manhood. Caius gave him the title of Prince of the Roman youths. Philo says that the object of Caius in adopting him was believed to be to take away from him the right, based on his grandfather's will, of being associated with himself in the empire, and to give himself those extensive, all-embracing legal rights over him, extending even to life, which were recognised as belonging to a father over a son.

The poor boy was delicate, and suffered from a cough that he was unable to overcome. One day he was at table with Caius, when the latter noticed that his breath had a medicinal savour, caused by Tiberius having taken some remedy for his cough. Caius at once and savagely

<sup>1</sup> A statue in the Vatican found at Cervetri most probably does represent the unfortunate girl, for with it was found an inscription that fixes it. She is dressed in a stola and palla, and wears a crown above the brow. In one hand is a censer, which has reference to the privileges of a vestal virgin with which Caius invested his sister. Unfortunately the figure was found without a head, and that now affixed to it did not originally belong to it.



charged him with having taken an antidote, as being suspicious of poison at the table, and loudly mocked him for thinking it possible to take any suitable precaution against him, his father by adoption, and his prince. Soon after he sent him a message by a tribune that he must put an end to himself, as it was unlawful for any man to shed the sacred blood of the Caesars. Tiberius bent his head for the blow, but the tribune did not venture to strike, and repeated to him the command of the emperor. Tiberius then took the sword, but as he had never seen any one killed<sup>1</sup> he did not know how to put an end to himself with it. The tribune indicated to him the most vital part, and the unfortunate boy then threw himself on the sword.

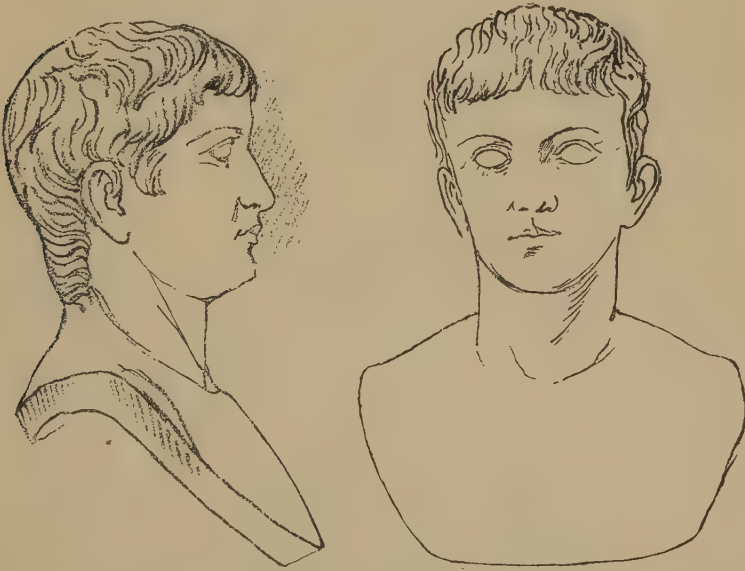


FIG. 85.—TIBERIUS GEMELLUS (?). Bust in the Lateran Museum (after Bernoulli<sup>2</sup>)

Caius gave out that the young prince had committed suicide, being weary of life and hopeless of recovery from his cough. The boy very probably was in a decline. This crime initiated a long series of others.

No man had more claims on his gratitude than Macro, who, so it was believed, had repeatedly interfered to save his life when Tiberius,

<sup>1</sup> And yet he had been brought up with his grandfather at Capreae. How is this reconcilable with the stories of executions there committed by order of Tiberius the elder?

<sup>2</sup> There are two busts that may taken to represent Gemellus, one in the Lateran, No. 153, one in the Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 715, where it is catalogued as Tiberius. There is a strong look of Tiberius in the face, and also of Drusus Minor; and yet it is certainly neither, the head being differently shaped. It is possible that these two may represent the unhappy Gemellus. Observe the hair down the nape of the neck.

uneasy at the danger that threatened his own grandson, and well aware of the crazy condition of the brain of Caius, meditated his destruction. But the obligations under which Caius had been laid by Macro were too great to be repaid. It was said that Ennia, the wife of Macro, had simulated a passion for the young prince, before the death of Tiberius, in the hopes of obtaining over the future emperor the ascendancy of a mistress. He had promised to make her his empress, and now was perhaps somewhat pertinaciously reminded by Ennia of his promise, and by Macro of his obligations.

According to Philo, Macro was entirely ignorant of the intrigue carried on between his wife and Caius, and he had not only saved the life of the prince when the suspicions of Tiberius were roused, but after Caius had come to the throne, he used his best endeavours to restrain him from unseemly exhibitions of levity. He was ever at his side, and by a touch of his elbow woke him when he nodded at table, or checked him when he roared with laughter at the jokes of the mimes, or bade him observe decorum when he cut fantastic capers to the playing of the flutists. All this annoyed the vain boy.

‘I am a boy no more,’ said Caius to his courtiers. ‘Look at that man, he conducts himself as though still my tutor. I, who was born a prince nursed by emperors, cradled in a cabinet of state, must, forsooth, bow before an audacious upstart, a novice affecting the airs of a hierophant.’ The doom of Macro was sealed, but as a favour he was permitted to be his own executioner, and Ennia to perish with him. After which all their children were put to death, that there might remain on earth no further reminder to Caius of his indebtedness to the family.

Having rid himself of his greatest benefactor, Caius proceeded to disencumber himself of his most prudent adviser. This was his father-in-law, M. Junius Silanus, a man who belonged to a noble and ancient family, who had been highly regarded by Tiberius, and had grown old in the discharge of responsible offices. Silanus was proconsul of Africa at the beginning of the reign of Caius, and was in command of the legion that was stationed in the province.

Caius resented the advice the old man sent him, that he should control his caprices, and correct the faults in his character. He recalled him from his command because he had thus presumed.

Shortly after the young emperor put to sea and ordered his father-in-law to attend him. The weather was rough, and the old man a bad sailor, and he put back to shore, or delayed his departure awaiting a smoother sea. Caius charged him with wilful disobedience and with intent to plot against him, and sent orders to an honourable and eloquent senator, Julius Graecinus, to impeach him. Graecinus refused to sully his reputation by such an act, and Caius in revenge had him put to death. Then Caius sent a message to the old man ‘to take his com-

pliments to the spirits of the dead'—meaning the deceased daughter of Silanus, his own girlish wife, Junia Claudilla, who had died two years before. There was but one interpretation of this message, and Silanus, in order to save the confiscation of his goods, committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor.

'Whether Caius acted the most infamous part in entering on his marriages, or in repudiating his wives, or in retaining them,' says Suetonius, 'it would be hard to say.' He had been married in Capree to Junia Claudilla, but she died, and in the first year of his reign being invited to the wedding of Caius Piso with Livia Orestilla, he took a fancy to the bride and carried her off, but tired of her very soon, divorced her after a few days, and two years later banished her. Then he happened to hear that Lollia Paulina, wife of a Memmius Regulus, in command of Macedonia, was very like her grandmother, who was a noted beauty. Lollia was the granddaughter of M. Lollius, whom Augustus had appointed tutor to Caius Caesar in the east, and there he had amassed a vast fortune. Lollia possessed the most magnificent sets of jewels of any Roman lady. It is of her that Ben Jonson happily says:—

'She came in like star-light, hid with jewels,  
That were the spoil of provinces.'—(*The Fox*, Act iii. Sc. 6.)

But in beauty she outshone her gems.

Caius ordered her to come to Rome, and being satisfied with her appearance, married her, but speedily tired of her also. But he loved with an unbounded and constant affection a woman named Caesonia, the mother of three daughters by another man, who was neither young nor beautiful. He married this woman. Caius was himself surprised at the strength of his attachment, and declared that he would some day put her on the rack to discover whether she had given him a love philtre or not. Sometimes he would touch her neck and laugh, and say, 'When I give the word, this beautiful throat will be hacked through.' But indeed this grim remark was made to others also. At a banquet to which he had invited the consuls, he suddenly burst into an unseemly fit of laughter, and when asked by the consuls what the joke was that had tickled his august fancy, 'Nothing,' he replied, 'but that at a single nod of mine you would both have your throats cut.'

Caesonia knew how to humour his capricious fancy. She would assume a military cloak and a glittering helmet, sling a shield on her arm, and ride by him when he reviewed the troops. Very shortly after their marriage she gave birth to a daughter, whom Caius acknowledged as his own child, and he gave it the name of Julia Drusilla, thereby taking it into the Julian family. When he saw the little creature bite and claw at its nurse, or fly at another child and try to tear out its eyes, Caius applauded and declared that after such exhibitions he could never doubt that the child was his own.

One day he found the roads muddy, whereupon he ordered the officer in charge of them to be brought before him, and his mantle to be laden with road-scrappings. That man's name was Vespasian, and when, many years after, this officer came to the empire, the incident was recalled and thought to have prognosticated his future greatness. Every tenth day the list of prisoners was brought to Caius and he signed the decree for their condemnation to death, which he called 'clearing his accounts'; but even this effort became irksome to him, a single wave of his hand was taken as a sufficient signification of his intention to hand over the victims to the executioner.



FIG. 86.—CAIUS. Bronze Bust at Turin (after Bernoulli).

He generally prolonged the sufferings of his victims, says Suetonius, by causing them to be inflicted by slight and frequently repeated strokes, his usual instruction being, 'strike so that he may feel himself die.' He had frequently in his mouth the words of the tragedian:—

'Let them hate me whilst they fear me!'

A different saying indeed from that of his predecessor, who was wont to say: 'Let them hate me whilst they *approve* my conduct.'

The question may be asked by the reader, Why are we to trust Suetonius in his statements relative to the cruelty of Caligula and to reject those relative to the cruelty of Tiberius? The statements rest on



totally different grounds. The latter gives us no evidence but hearsay of cruelties committed in Capreae, and names but two officers there tried and condemned to death. All the executions that took place in Rome took place by order of the senate, and the majority when Tiberius was not there. With Caius it was otherwise. The narratives of Suetonius and Dio are in full accord with what we know of Caligula from contemporaries, Philo the Jew and Seneca, the latter of whom gives us instances of his cruelty as bad as any story in Suetonius, and not as mere gossip; for he names the sufferers, and distinctly informs us that the executions were ordered by the prince, and were frequently carried out under his own eye.

But that is not all. The accounts we have of Tiberius come to us from a partisan source, they are all tinged with hatred of the Claudian house. On the other hand, the accounts we have of Caius—and the same applies to Nero—are furnished us by the men of their party, men who would, if they could, whitewash their memories and condone their acts, for Caius and Nero were of the Julian and not of the Claudian family, and the writers laboured under disappointment at the failure of these representatives, and were not inflamed with party malice against them.

Tiberius at his death left the exchequer well filled. It contained two thousand seven hundred millions of sesterces, amassed by his frugality and prudent administration. All this Caius squandered in less than a twelvemonth. Then, being in want of money, he had recourse to plundering the wealthy by false accusation and confiscation, and the people generally by taxation. Like a child he did not know the value of money.

Dio says of him that he was always uncertain, and flying from one extreme to another. 'Sometimes he liked to see people, sometimes to be alone. He was vexed when asked a favour, vexed when not asked one. He was energetic in some things, in others dilatory. He spent with limitless prodigality, but he also amassed with the most sordid greed. Sometimes he liked liberties to be taken with him, and flattery; at other times resented both. Sometimes he forgave the gravest faults, sometimes, and more often, put to death those who had committed none. His favourites he loaded with favours, at other times he treated the same men with the utmost contempt; so that no one knew what to say or to do to please him; and if there were some who kept in his good graces, it was due to accident rather than to their talents.' Compare with this the testimony of Philo, a contemporary. 'No one could trust his mood. When he had done a favour, he regretted it immediately, and sought means not only to take back what he had given, but to make it to be repaid with usury by the greatest wrongs. Thus, sometimes he delivered from prison certain persons and soon after sent them back again, adding to their former misery the despair of knowing that they

could never expect mercy. There were cases where he banished those who were in hourly expectation of sentence of death from so inexorable and cruel a judge. Then, when they were settling into happiness in their exile, and believing they had nothing more to fear, he sent orders for their execution. If he gave a largess to any one, he made that man return it, not as money lent on interest, but he exacted it as a sum of which he had been robbed, and accordingly the unhappy recipient was mulcted of all he had. Those who stood highest in his favour he ruined under the pretext of showing them a kindness, by dragging them about after him in his journeys undertaken capriciously, all of a sudden, at the first freak of his fancy, or by inviting himself to their table and forcing them to spend all they had, and involve themselves in debt to entertain him suitably. Consequently those who were prudent dreaded his favours as traps laid for their destruction.'

Seneca, another contemporary, says: 'He had a number of senators and Roman knights whipped and put to very cruel tortures in his presence, not that he expected to get any information out of them relative to a conspiracy, but simply because it amused him to see them suffer. Once he had some decapitated by torchlight whilst he was walking in a garden alley looking on. His cruelty did not allow him to postpone to the morrow the pleasure of an execution. He was the first to submit senators to torture. But it was a small matter for Caius to put senators to death like slaves, with whips and fires—he who daily exercised himself in cruelties, who only lived and thought to shed blood, who indeed once formed the plan to massacre the whole senate, and who wished that the Roman people had but one neck, that he might cut it through at once and so sum into one the crimes he was obliged to commit in detail and in different places.'

There is absolute unanimity in the accounts we have of Caius; those of contemporaries agree in the portrait with which we are presented by the historians who wrote at a much subsequent period. This is not the case with Tiberius. There is not a particle of contemporary evidence against him.

Caius gave orders for executions in Rome, in many cases without a form of trial. In his mad pride he strove to elevate the imperium into an oriental despotism. In the times of Augustus and Tiberius the empire had been disguised under modest forms, but under Caligula absolute power appeared in all its pride and recklessness.

On the Palatine, the seat of the Rome of Romulus, Augustus had possessed a simple dwelling unmarked by splendour, recognisable only by the withered wreath of oak leaves that swung above the door. Tiberius had added his palace beside that of Augustus; it was large but not sumptuous. But Caligula ordered all the houses, in what was one of the finest quarters of Rome, to be levelled, that he might build on their site a splendid palace and temples over against the Capitol. Augustus

bought the houses that stood in the way when he desired to extend the forum. Caius seized on the patrimony and ancestral mansions of the nobles because he wanted them, and gave no compensation.

But now, intoxicated with power and elevation, he became convinced of his own deification. That same 'assurance' which a self-righteous Christian professes, came over the pagan madman. We must not suppose that he and the Romans of his time had a conception of deity such as is ours. With them there was a certain *afflatus*, an inspiration, an exaltation into a condition of spiritual superiority to other mortals. And this is what Caius professed. Not content with having a temple to himself, in which stood his image of solid gold, he constituted himself his own priest and worshipper, which is what a great many people do practically now, though they have not the means of proclaiming it to all the world as had Caligula. This was a form of oriental extravagance. On some of the monuments of Egypt we see Rameses the king offering his oblations to Rameses the god. The temple of the Dioscuri, the three graceful columns of which now rise above the exhumed forum, served as vestibule to his palace, and Caius would descend into the temple and seat himself between the statues of the divine brothers to receive along with them the adoration of the people.

Philo tells us the line of reason Caius pursued: 'If the shepherds are of a different order from the sheep they pasture, and the bullock-drivers from the cattle under their rods, then I must be distinct and superior in kind to the mortals I rule.' This notion, according to Dio, was put into his head by Herod Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene.

He professed to be in constant communication with Jupiter Capitolinus, and would mutter as he walked, and pretend he was talking to the god, and hold his ear on one side and twist his brows with attention, and profess at such moments to be listening to the reply of the deity.

He assumed a beard of finely beaten gold thread, and passed along the streets thus adorned to be saluted as Jupiter; then he would appear with wings at his heels and adjusted to his cap, to represent Mercury; then with a bow and a quiver, his head surrounded by flashing rays, as Apollo. It was even said that he attempted to pass himself off, in appropriate costume, as one or other of the goddesses. But he was jealous of the supremacy of Jupiter, and he contrived a machine to rumble like thunder and emit flashes as lightning; then shouting, 'Kill me or I will kill thee!' he shot stones at the sky from a ballista.

The story—which if not true *e ben trovato*—is told that a Gaul once seeing him seated on a throne with his gold beard on, burst out laughing. Caius sent for him and asked, 'Do you know who I am?'

'Most certainly,' replied the barbarian, with homely honesty, 'you are an arrant fool.' 'Who is this man?' asked Caius. He was told that he was a cobbler. The would-be god waved him away. To take vengeance on a shoemaker was beneath his dignity.

The moon, he declared, was his wife, and when he could not sleep, in his nightly rambles in his porticos, where the white light lay in flakes, or in the garden where it lay in sheets as snow, he looked up at the silver orb, and maintained converse with her.

He went about surrounded by a train of attendants, who were dressed as the ministers of the deity he was pleased to personate at the time, and his gold statue was supplied with suits of clothes which were changed daily to correspond with those worn by Caligula.

He ordered the most famous statues to be brought from Greece, and then removed their heads and substituted his own for theirs. He desired Memmius Regulus, whose wife he had carried off, to send him the Zeus of Phidias, and was told in reply that lightning had fallen and consumed the vessel destined to transport the statue to Italy, and that laughter echoed from the pedestal when the workmen approached to remove it. It was happy for Regulus that the emperor died shortly after, otherwise he would have paid with his life for his lack of zeal.

Caius enrolled his own uncle Claudius and many of the chief men of the senate among the priests of the college for the worship of his august self. The sacrifices offered before his image were rare birds, pheasants, and peacocks. The obsequious senate ordered the erection of another temple to him in the city, and he commanded the elevation of a vast shrine to himself at Miletus that might serve as a place of pilgrimage to all Asia. The Alexandrian Greeks, with their usual levity, proved most eager to adopt this new cult. Only the Jews refused to do homage to the new god, and accordingly fell into disfavour. The Alexandrians with the enthusiasm of those who rush into extravagances in religion, fell on the Jews because they refused to pay divine honours to the images of Caius, plundered and burnt their houses, and subjected many to tortures and death. Orders were issued requiring instant submission. The Jews of Alexandria determined to send an embassy to the prince to explain the impossibility of their rendering to his representations the honour they considered to be due to God alone. Philo, the distinguished scholar, who strove to reconcile the books of Moses with the teachings of Plato, was commissioned to head the deputation, and to his pen we owe a most graphic and interesting account of the embassy. 'No other fragment of ancient history, excepting perhaps the fourth of Juvenal's *Satires*, gives us so near an insight into the actual domestic life of the rulers of the world; and though the style of Philo is laborious and turgid, and the character of his mind such as to engage little confidence in his judgment or even in



his statements of fact, nevertheless we cannot rise from its perusal without feeling that we have made a personal acquaintance, to use the words of another sophist, with "the kind of beast called a tyrant."<sup>1</sup>

The account of the introduction of the deputation to the emperor is too curious not to be given with some fulness.

When the embassy reached Rome they sought an immediate interview, for the distress under which their brethren were labouring rendered relief urgent. Their first meeting with the emperor was as he was walking in the gardens of Agrippina, that opened on the Campus Martius. They made their obeisance and he waved his hand in acknowledgment, and sent the officer to them whose function it was to introduce embassies, with the message, 'I will hear what you have to say on the first occasion.'

Then off went the emperor to Puteoli, and the Jews had to follow him. He was about to pay a visit of inspection to his numerous villas on the Neapolitan bay, and they were dragged along in his train, buoyed up with vain hopes of an interview. In the meantime they did their best to disarm the opposition of the favourite, Helicon, a freedman of the late emperor, who had been bought by the agents of the Alexandrians to oppose the Jews. 'Helicon attended and courted Caius night and day, never leaving him for a moment . . . he was with him everywhere, playing ball, in the palaestrum, in the baths, at table; he was chamberlain, and attended him when he went to rest. This charge gave him undivided access to the ear of the emperor. Caius neglected the affairs of state that he might delight himself with the buffooneries of Helicon. This man skilfully mingled sneers against us interwoven with his fooleries, so as to amuse the prince and to injure us at one and the same time. The jokes which seemed to be his main preoccupation were in fact a pretext, and the accusations which seemed to slip out inadvertently were what he was in reality intent on.'<sup>2</sup>

Whilst Philo and the rest of his deputies were thus running after the erratic prince, a messenger came to them to tell them that orders had been given for the erection of a colossal statue of Caligula in the Holy of Holies at Jerusalem. 'Stupified with this news, we remained riveted to the spot, silent, our hearts failing us, and our strength leaving us.' A consultation was held, but nothing was done. Nothing indeed could be done without an audience. The account of the deputation to Caius is fragmentary. Philo goes back to narrate what had taken place at Jerusalem, then comes a break, and then abruptly ensues the account of the interview at last obtained. 'When we approached him we could see by his look, by his movements, that we were before—not a judge, but an accuser, and a more embittered enemy than the rest.

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *Hist. of Romans*, v. 47.

<sup>2</sup> I have had to condense the very lengthy account of Philo, not only in this passage but in those that follow.

Caius behaved towards us with tyrannical insolence and monstrous arrogance, and despised all those measures taken by judges who seek to deal justly.

‘Caius summoned the two managers of the gardens of Maecenas and of Lamia which adjoin, and are near the city (on the Esquiline). He spent three or four days there. It was there that the drama was to be played, in our presence, which was to decide the fate of our entire nation! He had given orders that his villas should be thrown open. It was his intention to visit them in order. We were led before him. On reaching his presence we prostrated ourselves to the earth, with the marks of the highest respect, and saluted him with the names of Autocrat and Sebastos. He returned our salutations with an air that made us fear not only for our cause but for our lives. Grinding his teeth, he said to us with an insolent air: “Are you those people, enemies of the gods, who alone among men refuse to acknowledge my divinity, despise me and prefer the worship of your nameless God to that of myself?” At the same time he raised his hands to heaven and uttered a blasphemy which it is not permitted us to repeat.

‘Our enemies, the rival deputies, were sure of their triumph when Caius thus spoke. Transported with joy, they heaped on him the names of all the gods. Isidorus, vile calumniator, seeing him intoxicated with this homage, that raised him above humanity, said, “My Lord! you would hate these men the more if you knew all their detestation and irreverence towards yourself. When the whole human race offered sacrifices for your recovery, they alone refused. I do not mean these fellows here present only, I speak of all Jews.” We cried out with one voice, “Lord Caius, we are calumniated! we did sacrifice and shed blood at our altar for you, not once only but many times.” “So it may be,” answered he, “but your sacrifices were offered to another and not to me.” We shuddered to hear him speak thus.

‘This went on whilst he was running about from one of his villas to another, visiting the apartments for men, those for women, examining the floors, the ceilings, finding fault here and there, and giving orders that improvements should be made to render all more splendid. We followed him up and down, a butt for his jokes and the insults of our adversaries, just as in a farce in a theatre. And in verity, it was a sort of broad comedy, in which the judge takes the place of accuser, and the accusers take the part of a bad judge, and all justice is thrown aside and rancour rules the day. When a judge, and that an all-powerful one, attacks, silence is necessary, it even becomes a means of defence. That was the sole possible course for us, for we could not answer the accusations he poured on us; fear lest we should see our laws and our people destroyed held our tongues mute.

‘When he had given orders relative to the alterations he desired, he turned on us with the question, “Why do you not eat pig?” This pro-

voked a great guffaw from our adversaries ; some because their malevolence was gratified ; others, in hopes of currying favour, applauded, as though he had said something very clever and witty. This was carried so far that the officers of the palace showed themselves annoyed, and pointed out that this noise was hardly consonant with the respect due to an emperor, in whose presence only a smile was permissible in a very intimate acquaintance.

‘We replied to Caius relative to eating pig, that the customs of various countries differed. Some one threw in the observation that there were people who did not eat lamb. “And quite right too!” said Caius, laughing. “It is poor stuff.” Seeing ourselves the sport of sarcasm and impertinence we remained speechless.

‘Then the emperor burst forth in an explosion of rage. “I would like,” said he, “to know your customs and your political organisation.” We began to explain them to him, as he desired ; but he—not waiting to listen to what we had to say—dashed into the large house he was near. He went all through it, and ordered all the windows to be filled with clear crystal-like stone (talc), which would let in light, but exclude the wind and the glare of the sun. Then, becoming calmer, he came back to us and said in a milder tone, “What were you saying?”

‘Again we attempted to explain to him what he had asked to be informed about, and again off he darted, to run into another house and order some paintings for the walls. Seeing our pleading thus drawn out, interrupted, chopped up, we were overcome with despair. We were driven nearly mad, and expected death. Our anguish of heart was an appeal to the true God, who heard, and had pity on us, and turned the heart of the emperor to clemency. Caius relaxed in his humour, and said, “After all, these idiots seem to me to be more deserving of pity than of punishment because they do not believe that I partake of the divine nature.” Thereupon he left us and bade us be dismissed.’

This graphic picture fully confirms what we gather from Suetonius relative to the mind of Caius. Drunk with flattery, and with sudden succession to absolute power, his mind enervated by debauchery, his brain disturbed by the sickness that had fallen on him in the first year of his reign, and with insanity hereditary in his family, he was a mere creature of his passions, without steadiness of purpose, played on by any designing man who gained his ear.

Philo corroborates what the historians tell us of his extravagances. ‘He had suddenly changed his mode of life from the frugal regimen maintained under Tiberius to sumptuous luxury. He abandoned himself to wine and gluttony ; though he gorged, he could not satisfy his appetite. He took baths at the wrong times. Fresh orgies succeeded to his vomiting, in which meat and wine combined to stimulate him. Then came other excesses, all noxious to body and mind, and calculated to

snap the links that bound them together. . . . After his recovery from sickness he was transformed into a cruel tyrant, or rather he showed openly those inclinations which he had hitherto covered with a veil of hypocrisy.' Then he goes on to relate the murders of Tiberius Gemellus, of Macro and Ennia, and of Silanus, and proceeds to speak of Caius affecting to be a god, summing in himself all the characteristics of the many pagan deities. In a curious passage, and a very astonishing one to find in the mouth of a Jew, he speaks in glowing terms of the good done by the demi-gods, and contrasts with it the evil done by Caius. He speaks of his murders, his exile of his sisters, of his 'iron heart and pitiless soul.' 'Hast thou imitated Bacchus who filled the world with joy by his discoveries? Thou, Caius, hast indeed made inventions, but as a reprobate, to be the plague of mankind. Hast thou not turned joy into sorrow, and pleasure into mourning? Everywhere thou hast embittered life to all. Thou hast swept off to thyself the wealth of others, thrust on by thy insatiable greed. Thou sendest the abominable seed of thy malignant soul into the desolated provinces, to be the ruin of the human kind.

'Hast thou by thy great labours and deeds imitated Hercules, thou, the most cowardly and trembling of men? Thou who hast robbed all regions of the empire of the tranquillity and the prosperity they enjoyed.

'Why were wings put on the heels of Mercury but to show his agility as the announcer of good tidings? And the caduceus is put into his hand because his part is that of a pacifier. But what need had Caius for wings to his heels? Was it to publish everywhere his villainies that ought to be enveloped in eternal silence? Did he need celerity? He could produce crime on crime on one spot. Why the caduceus? There is not a family, not a city which he has not filled with trouble and civil war.

'What has he to do with Apollo? He who has massacred those unhappy men whose wealth he coveted, whom he was not content with robbing, but he must also have their blood.'

The ideas put into his head by Herod Agrippa worked there; he had probably been told by his friend of the great bridge that crossed the Tyropoean Valley, connecting Mount Zion, the Palatine of Jerusalem, with Mount Moriah, the Jewish Capitol. He resolved to rival and outdo it. A vast bridge was by his orders constructed, to extend from his palace to the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. It crossed the Velabrum and threw an arch over the temple of Augustus. It is thought that traces of the spring of this arch are still observable in the great cliff of masonry that rises above Sta. Maria Liberatrice. He needed this bridge, said Caligula, in order that he and his brother Jupiter might have ready communication with each other.

I may here quote the lines of Mr. J. B. B. Nichols, in *Love's Looking-Glass*, on the basalt bust in the Capitoline Museum:—



'Being in torment, how should he be still?  
 The slim neck twists; the eyes beneath the wide  
 Bent Claudian brows<sup>1</sup> shrink proud and terrified;  
 Along the beardless cheek the muscles thrill  
 Like smitten lute-strings. Can no strength of will  
 Silence this presence ever at his side,  
 This hateful voice, that will not be denied,  
 That talks with him, and mutters "kill" and "kill"?

O dust and shade, O dazed and fighting brain,  
 O dead old world that shuddered at his nod!  
 Only this iron stone endures, and thence  
 Looks forth a soul in everlasting pain,  
 The ghost of Caesar, maniac and god,  
 And loathes the weakness of Omnipotence.'

Caius had inaugurated his reign by showing the same deference to the senate that had been observed by Tiberius, but it was not for long. He had spoken against his predecessor and encouraged the expression of popular dislike to his memory; but all at once, in mad caprice, he turned round and began to praise him. One day he entered the senate and read to it a lengthy lecture. For himself, said he, as he was Caesar, he was at liberty to find fault with Tiberius, but that senators should venture to do this was an act of temerity deserving of chastisement. Who were those who had died by the hand of the executioner in the preceding reign?—not victims of Tiberius, but such as had been tried, condemned, and handed over to execution by the senate. 'Either,' said Caius, with remorseless truth, 'you did wrong to honour him in his lifetime by your decrees, or you have erred now in blaming him. You have taught me by this what to expect of you.'

After having continued awhile in the same strain, relative to the deaths of his mother and brothers, he affected to bring Tiberius himself on the stage, to address him in these terms: 'All you have said, Caius, is very true and appropriate; so my advice to you is, Do not trouble yourself with attempting to win the love of the senate. Do not spare them; they hate you. They wish for your death, and if they had the power they would kill you. Do not think of trying to win their favour, and do not trouble your head about anything they may say. Think only of your own security; whatever conduces to that end is lawful, thus you will have nothing to fear. You will enjoy yourself to the full; they will be forced to do you reverence whether they like it or not. If you seek their affection, you seek a vain reputation and lose the grasp upon solid power, and it will lead to your falling into the traps they will lay for you. No one in the world submits voluntarily. A prince is honoured only so long as he is feared; if he ceases to have power, let him die.'

This speech, astounding in its frankness, was but the echo of what

<sup>1</sup> A singular blunder. The bent brows are derived from Agrippa.

he had heard dinned into his ears in the lifetime of Tiberius ; not by Tiberius, but by the two Oriental princes, his bosom friends, Herod Agrippa and Antiochus of Commagene.

He at once restored the laws of high treason under which so many victims had fallen in the late reign, and which he had abrogated, then he abruptly left the senate-house. Silence fell upon the conscript fathers ; they looked in each other's faces in blank dismay. Hardly one among them had not launched forth invectives against the late emperor. So dazed and frightened were the senators that they separated without a word. On the morrow, however, they assembled in a crowd to lick the hand that smote them—the hand of a cowardly, truculent young ruffian of twenty-six, who in a thunderstorm hid himself quaking under his bed.

The senate passed by acclamation a vote of thanks to Caesar for his graciousness in allowing them to enjoy their lives, after having administered to them such just reprimands. They ordered that the day when this oration was made should be held memorable with sacrifices for ever. And these were the men who sighed for the restoration of the old Republic !

But it was not the senate alone that incurred the resentment of the young tyrant. He was no better pleased with the populace that he had likewise courted in the first months of his reign.

He had begun with shows in the circus and the amphitheatre, and, an unusual sight, had himself as prince presided. This contrast to the demeanour of the late emperor called forth the liveliest enthusiasm. But the time came when the people would willingly have been spared the honour of his presence. Caius was especially fond of chariot races, and he knocked down some arches of the aqueduct which brought the virgin water into the city, in order to make way for a racecourse. The rival charioteers were adorned with distinguishing colours—red, blue, green, and white, representing the four seasons—and the people enlisted themselves on the sides of their favourites with an ardour that at times threatened the peace of the city. The emperor himself favoured the green or vernal faction. He frequented the stables of his favourite grooms and racers, and rewarded with profusion the successful drivers when they belonged to his green party. He sought to give singularity to the races, and add to their brilliancy, and so had the course strewn with vermillion.

An assiduous spectator at the games, he became furious when the public applauded the drivers that were other than his own colour, and sulky if they did not fill all the benches at the races. A war of cross-purposes ensued. The people refused to cheer his green charioteers ; and then, weary of the shows, remained away. But after a while the fickle populace, tired of abstention, reappeared ; and Caius, to reward them, scattered among the crowd a multitude of tickets, on which were written the names of objects, to which he who obtained one of these

tickets might put in a claim. On one occasion when in the circus the people shouted, 'Down with the delators!' Caius rose in anger and went away into Campania, where he remained in a fit of sulks till the feast of the new goddess Drusilla, for which he came back to Rome.

The gladiatorial shows were also given with frequency and extravagance, and the restrictions imposed by Augustus on the number sent into the arena to butcher each other were swept away. It was the delight of Caius to witness, not the dexterous fence of single pairs of swordsmen, but the promiscuous struggling together of armed bands. It was not sufficient that professional gladiators and criminals should hack and slay each other in public, on various pretences; he compelled freedmen and nobles to expose themselves in these horrible contests; and on one occasion he presented as many as six-and-twenty knights together. One knight, who for some offence had been ordered to be exposed to wild beasts in the arena, cried out that he was innocent. The emperor summoned him to the imperial box, had his tongue cut out, and then sent him back to be finished by the tigers. As a variety to the monotony of the spectacles, he had the writer of a farce burned alive in the midst of the amphitheatre because he suspected that certain lines in the play were levelled at him. He condescended occasionally himself to enter the arena. On one such occasion he contended with a gladiator, who parried all the blows of his assailant and forbore inflicting a wound. When Caius was exhausted and weary, the gladiator knelt to ask his forgiveness. The young ruffian at once seized the opportunity to stab him, and then, flourishing a palm-branch, declared himself the victor in the games. On one occasion, when the number of criminals condemned to fight with beasts was insufficient, he suddenly commanded some of the spectators to be dragged from the benches into the arena and opposed defenceless to the lions.

'When flesh was to be had only at a high price for feeding the wild beasts reserved for the spectacles, he ordered that criminals should be given to them to be devoured, and upon inspecting the accused in a row, whilst he stood in the portico, without troubling himself to examine their cases, he ordered all to be dragged away without distinction. After disfiguring many persons of honourable rank, by branding them in the face with hot irons, he condemned them to the mines, or to work at the repairs of the high roads, or to fight with wild beasts; or else, tying them by the neck and heels, he would shut them up in cages, or saw them asunder. He compelled parents to witness the execution of their sons; and to one who excused himself on the plea of indisposition, he sent his own litter. Another he invited to his table immediately after he had witnessed the spectacle, and coolly challenged him to jest and be merry.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sue. *Calig.* 27.

## IV.—THE MADMAN.

IN his famous proclamation to the senate which was registered in its acts Caius had frankly declared his intentions to rule by fear.

‘There is nothing in myself I find so admirable,’ said he, ‘as my inflexible rigour.’ To express this, in his busts he was represented as frowning, and with his head turned with a peculiarly savage air on one side, an attitude afterwards adopted by Caracalla.

If we were to judge of Caius by his busts and statues, we should say that he had a face of considerable beauty. Yet from the description of his personal appearance given us by Suetonius we would not have expected this. As already said, there is a difficulty about the identification of these portraits. For Caius struck few medals, and those he did strike have not on them heads that are sufficiently characteristic to enable us, as in the case of Augustus and Tiberius, to fix his likeness with anything like certainty. Now, among the statues and busts that are found in the museums is a whole series of portraits resembling each other more or less, which are all certainly the likenesses of the same young man. The face bears some resemblance to the young Augustus,<sup>1</sup> and is certainly the portrait of one of the Julian family. It is not, however, that of Octavius, for it differs from it in shape of head, as well as in other particulars, and there is absolutely no one else whom we can conceive that it represents. The busts of Caligula we know were very numerous. If these be not they—then what has become of them all, and for whom can these portraits be intended? The typical Caligula portrait, by which all have been determined, is the wonderfully preserved green basaltic bust in the Capitol, that is not only absolutely without a flaw, but has also preserved its epidermis and polish in an astonishing degree, so much so, indeed, that it has been doubted whether it can be of classic, and is not of Renaissance work. But this bust has been in existence for some time,<sup>2</sup> and since its first recorded appearance many more busts have been found all bearing a close resemblance to it. That it is a Renaissance forgery is highly improbable; for a Renaissance sculptor who wanted to create an ideal Caligula would certainly have gone to Suetonius for inspiration; and this portrait does not agree with the conception of Caius we get from this writer, though it does with a second bust of white marble, also in the Capitoline Museum, found since the time of Winckelmann, with one in the Villa Albani with veil over the back of the head,

<sup>1</sup> The people apparently noticed the resemblance, for Suetonius tells us that they were wont to call him ‘the young Augustus.’

<sup>2</sup> It existed in the time of Winckelmann and of Bottari (middle of last century). The fact of its preservation of gloss is not extraordinary. That of Commodus as Hercules in the Palace of the Conservatori is far more highly polished, and is of marble only, whereas this of Caius is of the harder basalt.



with a bronze bust at Turin, with a statue found at Minturnae, and a head from Cervetri in the Vatican, as well as with others whose genuineness has been questioned.

This is the description of Caligula as given by Suetonius :—‘He was tall, of a pale complexion, ill-shaped, his neck and legs very slender, his eyes and temples sunken, his brows broad and knit, his hair thin, and the crown of his head bald. The rest of his body was much covered with hair. On this account it was reckoned a capital crime for any person to look down from above, as he was passing by, or so much as to mention a goat. His countenance, which was naturally hideous and frightful, he purposely rendered more so, forming it before a mirror into the most horrible contortions. He was crazy both in body and mind, having been subject when a boy to epileptic attacks.’

It will be seen at once that this description would never have led a Renaissance artist to excogitate by its help such a Caligula as the basalt head. Besides, the existence of a number of similar portraits excludes this idea. That in the statues and busts we have not the spindly legs and the thin neck, nor the bald pate in the prematurely oldened boy, is not surprising, as he would have resented a reproduction of his deformities with a sentence of execution, and sculptors would moreover be inclined to avoid what was inartistic. For the same reason, they disguised the sunken temples by locks of hair drawn down between the brow and the ears; the ‘naturally hideous and frightful’ countenance described by Suetonius probably signifies the expression assumed, and not any malformation of feature. Indeed, it is difficult to suppose that Caius could have been other than well moulded in feature when his sisters were so beautiful, and his mother was so fine a woman; his father also was a very good-looking man; indeed, the only strain of unaristocratic blood would come from Agrippa, from whom he inherited the overhanging brow, and the sharp curve under the lower lip; but Agrippa had a fine profile. If the portrait in the Vatican I have given as Agrippina be rightly identified, then the frown on the brow of Caius came to him through his mother, who also had it from Vipsanius Agrippa, his grandfather; and there was no lapse in the continuity of the peculiarity.

As already said, there is a family likeness in Caius to Augustus, but Caius has not the brain formation of Octavius, and his face is longer, the upper lip projects more, and has in it a more pronounced channel. The chin of Caius is not as finely formed, and has a dint in the middle, which appears also in the chin of his sister Agrippina (Fig. 109). The profile of brow and nose almost in a line is rather that of Vipsanius Agrippa than that of Augustus.

On the Capitoline bust of Caligula in basalt M. Ampère observes: ‘The features of Caligula are regular and beautiful; but all his portraits give him a violent and sinister expression, a true image of his cruel and disturbed mind. One recognises the *frons lata et torva*, the broad and

sombre brow spoken of by Suetonius ; one reads in his face the *natura saeva et probrosa* of the same author, and the *turbata mens*, the troubled intellect, of Tacitus. Moreover, we know that he laboured to give his features a ferocious expression. Nowhere is this expression more striking than in the basalt bust of the Capitol. This black stone hardened by fire was well fitted to be moulded to reproduce the implacable hardness, the ardent ferocity, and the nigrity of the soul of Caligula.' M. Mayor says of it : 'A denunciatory bust. All evil instincts are mirrored in it. The jaw is strong ; asymmetry is apparent. Ears thrown out from the head. Head turned ; expression sardonic and cruel. Upper lip drawn up on one side like that of a beast when about to bite. Darwin has pointed out this characteristic as a token of atavism. Asymmetry of the eyes and of the eyebrows. The left eye higher than the other, and further from the nose.'<sup>1</sup>

In the statue at Naples, found at Minturnae, where the head had served for boatmen to attach their boats to it, there is the same irregularity in the eyes ; the mouth is distorted through epilepsy. This head has been too much restored to be relied on as a portrait. The nose is entirely new.

On the Uffizi bust, M. Mayor says : 'The expression is sinister, cruel, bad-tempered, saturnine, mistrustful. It is the face of a man subject to epileptic fits. There is a threatening contraction in the angle of the upper lip. Yet this is evidently an idealised portrait.'

Viktor Rydberg thus describes the basalt bust : 'The head is turned slightly aside, the brow thunders, the eyes lighten, the fine mouth is pressed wrathfully and scornfully together ; but one can see at once that this look is counterfeited or practised : it is still the theatrical tyrant only, with features arranged for his part.' Rydberg says of the several portraits, beginning with this and ending in one in the Villa Borghese, 'they are milestones along the road to villainy.'

Caius was constitutionally timid ; at the slightest sound of thunder he would wrap his head in a mantle to hide the glare of lightning from his eyes, and muffle the mutter of thunder to his ears. If the storm was bad, he would creep under his bed. Once he visited Sicily, but was so frightened by the fire and smoke from Mount Etna that he ran away in the night. When in Germany, being in a narrow defile, a companion happening to remark that were the enemy to attempt a surprise they would be easily able to crush the Roman invader, Caius jumped on a horse and galloped back without drawing rein to the Rhine, where, finding the bridge over the river crowded with camp-followers and baggage-carriers, he insisted on being passed along over their heads to the further bank.

'In the fashion of his clothes, shoes, and all the rest of his dress,

<sup>1</sup> There is in the busts of the Julian family a remarkable irregularity in the eyes. No Renaissance sculptor would purposely have made these irregularities.

he did not wear what was either national or properly civic, or peculiar to the male sex, or appropriate to mere mortals. He often appeared abroad in a short coat of stout cloth, richly embroidered and blazing with jewels, in a tunic with sleeves, and with bracelets on his arms; sometimes in silks, and habited like a woman; at other times with buskins; sometimes in the sort of shoes used by the light-armed soldiers, or in the sock affected by women. He wore very commonly the triumphal ornaments, and sometimes the breastplate of Alexander the Great, taken out of his coffin.'

He had a favourite horse called Incitatus, or 'Go-ahead.' 'The day before the Circensian games, he would send soldiers to enjoin silence in the neighbourhood of the stables, lest the sleep of his steed should be disturbed. For this beast he had made a marble stall, an ivory manger, purple housings, and a jewelled frontlet. He, moreover, appointed for it a house with a retinue of slaves, and fine furniture, for the reception of such as were invited in the name of his horse to supper with him. It is even said that he intended to make him a consul.' Dio says he did make of his horse priest to his temple. If Caius were mad this is all possible enough; if not, it may be the mere exaggeration of gossip. Caius, however, was in age hardly a man. In the wantonness of enjoyment of supreme power, after a youth of severe restraint alternating with indulgence, it would be hard to say that any folly would be too great for him to commit. In his truculent mood he delighted to insult the Roman nobility, and there was a certain grim humour in him that might prompt him to such an outrage as the nomination of a horse to be consul.

'However we may interpret it,' says Viktor Rydberg, 'Caligula's mental growth was undoubtedly dwarfed. It seems to me as if the furious worker of violence had throughout his life something of the child remaining—nay, all except its innocence and amiability. Out of these qualities he grew early. But he had the child's entire lack of knowledge of itself, its leaning towards the adventurous and fanciful, its eagerness to prove the extent of its powers, its inability to grasp the reason for the existence of other wills, its impulse to destroy, and to create without purpose. There is something *naïf*, something of the simple security of nature, in his most shameful misdeeds. He was a pestilent boy who had got the world and mankind for playthings, and at their expense gave a loose rein to his mischievous humour. He was never able altogether to recover from astonishment at the vastness of his power.'

This characterisation is, I believe, most true. Suetonius and Dio tell us of his misdeeds, of his extravagances, but do not understand the nature of the monster they depict. Rydberg hits him off with a master-stroke. He was a man with a stunted intellect, who never was able to rise to understand that he had duties to perform. His masquerading

as a god or a goddess was the folly of a child ; his barbarities were the wantonness of a child, that does not realise the pain it is giving, or the gravity of its acts ; his cowardice was the timidity of a child ; his love of games and shows was the delight of a child in amusements ; his treatment of senate and people, now humouring them, now insulting them, was the caprice of a child.

Perhaps the most extravagant toy with which Caius played was his bridge of boats across the Baian Gulf, from Bauli to Puteoli, a distance of about two miles. From Puteoli he constructed a mole built on arches, the remains of which may still be seen extending twelve hundred feet into the sea. On the further side of the bay is a spit of land that projects into the waves. Vipsanius Agrippa, the grandfather of Caius, had thrown up a mole in the depth of this bay to enclose the Lucrine lake against the sea, cut a channel between it and the lake Avernus, and had converted them into two basins of an excellent harbour. Perhaps the freak took Caius that he would surpass the work of his grandfather ; perhaps he believed a prophecy that had been made when he was at Capreae that he would not be an emperor unless he could ride across the gulf dryshod ; perhaps he would excel Hercules, whose attributes he assumed, and who was fabled to have cast up the sandbank, utilised by Agrippa in the construction of his sea-dyke. Caius 'ransacked the havens far and near to collect every vessel he could lay hands on, till commerce was straitened in every quarter, and Italy itself threatened with famine. These vessels he yoked together side by side in a double line, extending from one shore to the other. On this broad and well-compacted base he placed an enormous platform of timber ; this again he covered with earth, and paved after the manner of a military high road, with stones hewn and laid in cement. The way thus built was furnished with numerous stations and post-houses, for the use of which fresh water was conveyed by an aqueduct from the continent. Such, it seems, was this extraordinary bridge : it could never have been intended to retain it permanently ; it was doubtless necessary to restore the vessels which had been pressed into the service of the prince's vanity ; but he determined, before abandoning his work, to enact on it a peculiar pageant, the novelty and brilliancy of which should transcend every recorded phantasy of kings or emperors. He declared that he would drive across the bay, not alone in his chariot, but attended by an army, and arrayed as an emperor indeed. The great world of Rome mustered on the shores around to witness the imperial miracle. From Puteoli to Misenum the semicircle of the bay was crowded with admiring multitudes ; the loungers of the baths and porticos sallied forth from their cool retreats ; the promenaders of the Lucrine beach checked their palanquins and chariots, and hushed the strains of their delicious symphonies ; the terraces of the gorgeous villas which lined the coast,

A. U. C. 792.

A. D. 39.

Aet. 27.



and breasted the fresh and sparkling ripple, glittered with streamers of a thousand colours, and with the bright array of senators and matrons, drowning the terrors which day and night beset them in shrieks of childish admiration. The clang of martial music echoed from shore to shore. From Bauli the emperor descended upon the bridge, arrayed in a coat of mail, adorned with precious gems, which had been worn by Alexander the Great, with his sword by his side, his shield on his arm, and crowned with a chaplet of oak leaves. On horseback, followed by a dense column of soldiers, he traversed the solid footway, and charged into Puteoli as a conquering foe. There he indulged his victorious army with a day of rest and expectation. On the morrow he placed himself in a triumphal car and drove back exulting, in the garb of a charioteer of the Green at the games of the Circus. The mock triumph was adorned by pretended captures, represented by some royal hostages from Parthia, at the time in custody of the Roman government. The army followed in long procession. In the centre of the bridge the emperor halted and addressed an harangue to his soldiers on the greatness of their victory, from a tribunal erected for the purpose. He contrasted the narrow stream of the Bosphorus and the Hellespont, at most seven stadia in width, with the broad ocean which he had yoked in chains, and declared that the exploits of Xerxes and Darius were trifles compared with his mightier enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

‘After wearying himself and his hearers with this prodigious folly, he distributed money among them, and invited them to a banquet. At this entertainment the emperor retained his place on the bridge, but the soldiers were collected around him, for the most part in vessels. It extended far into the night, and at nightfall the bridge and the ships were illuminated with torches, and at the signal the whole curving line of coast shone forth, as in a theatre, with innumerable lights. Charmed with the stillness of the water, and the brilliancy reflected upon it, the populace crowded round in boats, and partook of the mirth and festivity. But their holiday did not end without a frightful disaster, many of the spectators on the boats or on the bridge being jostled accidentally into the waves. Those who fell, and those who might have saved them, were, it seems, equally intoxicated: the light was uncertain; no one gave, or none received, orders; and the emperor himself, we are told, was overcome with wine; whether drunk or sober, it is not impossible that he enjoyed the horror of the scene, and even forbade assistance to be rendered to the sufferers.’<sup>2</sup>

The inordinate vanity of Caius made him resent any one being thought to be better than himself in any way. In his insensate jealousy, he forbade the Pompeii to bear the name of Magnus, and

<sup>1</sup> It is noteworthy that his mind runs on the exploits of Oriental tyrants, and shows that the ideas infused by Herod were still working.

Merivale, *History of Romans*, v. 64-8.



FIG. 87.—CAIUS. Statue in the Mus. Nation., Naples. Found at Minturnae.

the Torquati to wear their golden torques, and the Cincinnati to flourish a curl on their temples, as hereditary badges of their illustrious families. When Ptolemy, son of king Juba, and his own cousin, whom he had invited to Rome, entered the theatre in his purple robe of royalty, all the spectators rose to stare at him. This so stirred the bile of Caius that he had him put to death. Envious of men with abundant heads of hair, as his own crop was falling out, he would suddenly order any such men whom he noticed in his way to be swept off to the barber's and have half their heads shaved. There was in Rome a very tall man, who went by the name of the Colossus. Caius observing him in the amphitheatre, ordered him to be dragged from his seat and thrust into the arena, and forced to contend with a gladiator, and when he proved more than a match for this man, then with a second. On his worsting this opponent also, he commanded the tall fellow to be bound, clothed in rags, and drawn up and down the streets, 'and after being exhibited in this sorry plight to the women, to be then butchered.' There was, says Suetonius, no man of however mean a condition whom he did not envy, if that man were suspected of any excellency which might excite his envy. A volunteer gladiator who fought in a light chariot had so distinguished himself that he was applauded by the people vociferously. Caligula was so incensed that any other man than himself should meet with such acclamations, that he started from his seat, and in his haste treading on the fringe of his toga, fell sprawling down the steps. He gathered himself up, convulsed with rage, and went away, shouting to the assembled crowd of spectators, 'A people who are masters of the world pay greater honour to a gladiator than to princes admitted among the gods, or to my own majesty here present in their midst!'

There was a certain Domitius Afer,<sup>1</sup> a man of note as an orator. He had impeached Claudia Pulchra, the friend of Agrippina the elder, and cousin to Caius. But this the young emperor perhaps forgot. What moved his wrath was hearing Domitius extolled as the most eloquent of pleaders. Now Domitius had erected a statue of the emperor, with an inscription recording his age (twenty-seven), and the fact that he was twice consul. Caius thereupon himself impeached Domitius in a set speech as attempting to sneer at his sacred majesty by alluding to his youth, and, in conjunction with it, stating that he had been consul in contravention to the laws which fixed the age at which men were eligible for the consulship.

The entire senate was assembled to hear the charge of Caius against the great orator. When the emperor had done, Domitius adroitly declined to exculpate himself. After hearing such a denunciation, in terms so eloquent, uttered with such consummate mastery of words,

<sup>1</sup> He was a native of Nemausus (Nîmes). He died of over-eating himself in the principate of Nero, and Pliny gives some details about his will, *Epist.* vii. 18.

with such grace of declamation, he declared that nothing was left him but to throw himself in tears at the feet of his accuser, and appeal to his mercy. Caius was so elated at the thought that he had silenced the greatest speaker in the senate that he did not press the accusation.

Some one afterwards in confidence remarked that it would have been as well for him not to have attacked Domitius. 'Would you have had me throw away the chance of making such a splendid speech?' answered Caligula, and soon after he rewarded Domitius for his adroit flattery by appointing him consul.

Among the favourites of the emperor was a young Roman noble of the ancient and illustrious Aemilian race, one of which had been triumvir along with Augustus and Antony, at the division of the world. This was Marcus Aemilius Lepidus. It galled this man to think that the descendant of Augustus and of Antony had come to power, whereas the Aemilii Lepidi had remained without any advancement. But he kept his counsel and united with Caius in his revels, and was rewarded with the hand of Drusilla, his youngest sister; she, however, was snatched from him immediately by Caius, without however formally dissolving the union.

When the emperor fell ill in the first year of his reign, he bequeathed his inheritance and the succession to the empire to his sister Drusilla; and as Drusilla was still the legal wife of Lepidus, had the emperor died, he might have looked to succeed him by virtue of his marriage to Drusilla. But Caius recovered and Drusilla died. Lepidus saw himself disappointed in his hopes, hopes the more confident as the prince was at that time childless, and the next claimant, Tiberius Gemellus, had been put to death.

This disappointment was more than Lepidus could brook; and he formed plans to remove out of his way, by violent means, the young Caesar, who was alienating from him the senators and capitalists by his insults, and the people by his taxes.

As we have not the account of Tacitus we are left very much in the dark relative to a good deal that took place in this reign, but so much we do know that Lepidus won the promise of assistance from Gaetulicus, who stood at the head of the legions in Germany, and was much beloved by them. In the plot were also involved the two sisters of the emperor, Agrippina and Julia. Agrippina was married to Domitius Ahenobarbus, but he was old and failing, and she was in the bloom of youth, and fired with ambition. Lepidus for his plans required a princess of the imperial house as his wife, if he was to claim the throne, and inheritance of the Julian family; and Agrippina, on her side, required a man of rank and influence, that she might attain to the goal she kept in view. Already, contrary to Roman precedent, the women of Julian blood were claiming, or were allowed, a right and place of their own, independent of those of their husbands. Everything seemed to favour



the conspirators. Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus had been so long at his post, and had treated his soldiers with so much consideration, that he could calculate on their standing by him, and the legions on the Lower Rhine were under the command of his brother-in-law Apronius; they also could be reckoned on.

But Caligula was possessed of that cunning that goes with derangement of intellect. He suspected that an intrigue was being carried on between his eldest sister and his favourite. He was probably warned that dissatisfaction was rife in the German legions, and that sedition was being there industriously fomented. He resolved to go into Germany himself, and to take his sisters and Lepidus along with him.

On his way through Gaul he took every possible means, not scrupling to have recourse to the basest, to get the threads of the conspiracy into his hands, and finally succeeded in obtaining the correspondence of all involved. Thereupon the blow fell.

Lepidus and Gaetulicus were arrested and executed. Gaetulicus was cut down at the command of the emperor by a military tribune named Dexter. Strangely enough, Caius spared the lives of his sisters, perhaps scrupling to have the sacred blood of the Julian race shed; perhaps because the sisters were not sufficiently compromised in the plot to entitle him to put them to death. He contented himself with having them impeached on a side charge—probably a false one—of adultery, and sentenced to banishment. All their goods were confiscated, and Caius had their furniture, their statuary, their trinkets, their slaves transported into Gaul and sold by auction to rich provincials under his own eyes. Among the articles thus put under the hammer were a number of mementos of the Emperor Augustus, and at the auction Caius himself narrated the history, or pointed out the rarity, of such articles, so as to stimulate the purchasers to bid high for them.

‘See,’ said he, ‘this is a vase; and this a statue that Antony sent from Egypt. Here, again, is a gem, or a picture which the divine Augustus brought from the East. This was a trophy of my father’s; and that was a trinket that belonged to my mother.’

To fill up the measure of his shameless meanness, he at the same time published the correspondence of his sisters with their lovers or admirers. To the temple of Mars the Avenger he sent a dagger, which he pretended had been destined for his own heart by the conspirators.

The princesses were decreed to have lost all their hereditary honours, and were sent for confinement to the Ponza Isles. A similar fate befell one of those involved in their intrigues, Sophonius Tigellinus, who later, under Nero, attained to such terrible notoriety. He was deported to the barren rock of Squillace, on the southern coast of Lower Italy, where he supported his life as a fisherman’s assistant.

Caius granted the request of the Aemilian family, that the ashes of

Lepidus might be given to the mausoleum of the race, but with savage irony he forced Agrippina, who had schemed a marriage with this ambitious man, herself to bear the urn that contained his ashes in her arms to Rome, without suffering her throughout the whole journey, night or day, to desist from embracing it. Domitius was now dead, leaving an only son, Nero, aged three years. The wrath of Caius extended from Agrippina to her child. He deprived him of all his father's inheritance, and confiscated it to his own necessities. Thus the fatherless and motherless son of Agrippina, the great-grandchild of Augustus, was left destitute in infancy, to be nursed and cared for by his aunt Lepida, sister of his father, and mother of the afterwards infamous Messalina, the mortal enemy of Agrippina.

The success of the auction of the goods of his sisters delighted Caius, and as he was in need of money, he resolved to raise more by the same means. He accordingly sent to Rome for the furniture of the old palace that had been built by Tiberius, and which he had abandoned for his own more sumptuous structure,—‘pressing, for the conveyance of these articles,’ says Suetonius, ‘all the carriages let out on hire in the city, and all the horses and mules that belonged to the bakers, so as to interfere seriously with the conveyance of the bread supply in Rome. Moreover, many engaged in law-suits lost their causes, because they could not hire conveyances to carry them to the courts in time to observe their recognisances. In the sale of the furniture every trick was employed. Sometimes Caius would rail at the bidders for being niggards, and ask them if they were not ashamed to be better off than himself. At another he would affect to regret that the property of princes should pass into private hands. He had found that a rich provincial had given two hundred thousand sesterces to his chamberlain for an underhand invitation to his table, and he was delighted to find that the honour of dining with him was so highly valued. Next day, as the same person was sitting at the sale, he sent him some bauble, for which he told him he must pay two hundred thousand sesterces, and that he should sup with Caesar that evening at Caesar’s own invitation.’

A story told of another of his auctions may be given here, though it occurred at Rome. After one of his great public shows, the scaffoldings and decorations were put to the hammer, and the Caesar attended the sales with great glee. Seeing that an aged and wealthy senator had gone to sleep during the auction, he bade the auctioneer take each of the old fellow’s nods as a bid, and when the sleeper awoke, he found that he was down for a vast amount of rubbish for which he had to pay a fabulous sum.

The expedition of Caius to Germany was not one of vain bombast. It had a motive, and the journey was probably suggested to him by one of his disinterested advisers, sugared possibly with the suggestion that it might lead to a triumph. He mistrusted the fidelity of the legions

on the Rhine and in Gaul, and thought to win, or terrorise them ; to win them he lavished on them the sums raised by his auctions, and squeezed in other ways from the rich Gauls ; and to terrorise them he threatened a massacre of such soldiers as had mutinied upon the death of Augustus, and had proclaimed Germanicus.

A. U. C. 793.  
A. D. 40.  
Aet. 28.

But that had taken place twenty-six years before, and probably few of those engaged in the mutiny were then under the colours. Nevertheless he would, he said, make an example of the legions. This was a mere excuse ; he was afraid to admit his real reason—alarm at the spread of disaffection against himself.

But the threats of Caius got wind among the soldiers, and when he began to draw a cordon of mounted troops around them, and bade them deliver up their arms, their attitude became so menacing that Caius was struck with a panic, and hastily returned to Italy, not daring to execute his menace, and resolving to expend his anger on the helpless senators of Rome, who were incapable of resistance.

When an embassy from the senate came to salute him on his way, and urge him to return to a capital languishing in despair at his absence : ‘Yes, yes !’ said he, ‘I shall soon arrive in Rome,’ then, striking his hand on the pommel of his sword, he said, ‘and this shall come with me.’ He sent orders to have a proclamation stuck up on the walls in Rome announcing that he would return to his faithful knights and people, but not to the senate that loved him not. Nor would he suffer a senator to approach him as he neared Rome. He entered the city on his birthday, the 31st August. He was angry with the senate because honours had not been decreed to him for his achievements in Germany, and in his campaign against Britain, which had consisted merely of a march to the sea-coast at Gessoriacum (Boulogne) and the reception of a few hostages sent over from Britain. And yet he had given express orders that no honours were to be decreed to him. In his capricious humour it was equally dangerous to obey and to disobey him in such matters. To the people he showed some favours, for he ascended to the roof of the Julian Basilica in the forum, and thence threw gold and silver among the crowd. In the rush and scramble many were injured, and some killed. It was asserted that with the money he scattered were sharp knives, and that these wounded many on whom they fell, or who grasped inadvertently at them. Although such a mischievous freak was not incompatible with the character of Caius, this is probably an exaggeration.

It has been unnecessary to enter into particulars relative to the expedition of Caligula into Germany, and his campaign against Britain, for the accounts we have of them bear on the surface the appearance of caricature ; and we are not engaged on a general history, but on a biographical sketch, with the object of bringing out the individual features of each prince’s character and disposition.

No sooner was Caius back in Rome than he made good his menace

against the senate. He did not attempt to sweep them off wholesale, as he had threatened to do with the soldiers, but to pick them off in detail. The execution of a certain Cassius Bettlinus was ordered, and he commanded his father, Capito, to witness his son's death. 'You may bid me be present,' answered Capito, 'but cannot prevent me shutting my eyes.' Caius thereupon ordered him to be put to death along with his son. He had commanded the execution of the son of a Roman knight named Pastor, and forced the wretched father to come and sup with him the same evening. Pastor dared not refuse, as he had another son, and feared for his life. Caius set a slave to watch the father through supper, and see that he did not wince, sigh, or show any token of sadness. 'Caius was wont,' says Seneca, 'to have the mouths of those he condemned choked with a sponge, lest they should heap imprecations upon him.'

The crazy young tiger delighted in humiliating the senators. Seneca gives an instance. He had pardoned Pompeius Pennus, a very aged man, who had held several offices in the state; but he obliged the old man, not only to kneel to him, but he thrust forth his foot in gilded sandals, embroidered with pearls, and bade him kiss it.

But perhaps the greatest humiliation to which the senate was subjected was when he made them take on themselves the function of executioner. One of his agents, a freedman, was named Protogenes, and stood high in his favour. This man entered the senate-house one day, whereupon the senators rose and crowded about him, fawning and soliciting his favour. Protogenes glanced angrily at one named Scribonius Proculus, and said to him, 'What! do you, who are an enemy to Caesar, dare to approach me with a salutation?' That sufficed. The rest of the senators, with shrieks of execration, rushed on the unhappy man and stabbed him with their iron styles, then cast him out to the rabble, who tore him in pieces, and dragged about his limbs piecemeal under the eyes of the emperor, then piled them in a heap before him.

#### V.—THE MURDER OF CAIUS.

WE have had enough and to spare of these horrors. The day of reckoning was rapidly approaching. Some sense of alarm seems to have hovered about the clouded mind of Caius. His prosperity had been so great, and his power had been unresisted. The gods whom he had mocked were jealous, and did not suffer mortals to have their measure of happiness too full. It was with this thought in his mind, making him uneasy, that he complained that no great disaster had occurred in his reign, like the slaughter of the legions of Varus in that of Augustus, or the fall of the amphitheatre of Fidenæ in that of Tiberius. He sighed



that no conflagration, pestilence, earthquake, had taken place to right the balance, and he shook in dire fear lest Nemesis should mark him down in place of his people.

For four years the Roman empire had groaned under his wanton tyranny. Conspiracies had been formed against him, but had been discovered or betrayed before they were carried into execution. Finally, a term was put to his reign by a favourite minister of his cruelties, in revenge for a private wrong, though not without the privity of others about his person. The death of the tyrant was due to a palace conspiracy, and to that alone. Though senators and nobles were privy to it, they contributed nothing to its success, and were unprepared with a plan for taking advantage of it when it had been carried out.

Caius himself, by his own folly, destroyed the props on which his safety rested. Rome had borne patiently, though muttering disapproval when its prince had outraged common morality by his association with Drusilla; and when he had elevated her among the gods after her death, and had proclaimed himself a deity equal to Jupiter, the religious sense of the better sort was shocked, but his power was not seriously endangered. He put senators and knights to death in great numbers, under the most transparent pretexts; he laid his hands on private property with the most unscrupulous audacity; he plundered the treasures of Gaul with unblushing frankness. The mob was indifferent, or approved. It had no love for the nobility and plutocracy. Each wealthy man trembled for his life and his money-bags, and was silent, too timorous to venture aught, too suspicious to trust any one, and form a league for mutual protection against the common foe.

The senate and the knights Caius knew well that he could never win, though he might force them into obedience, but he showed for some time a desire to stand well with his people. When, however, he was reduced to straits for money, he imposed taxes that affected the rabble and the general public. He taxed all food brought in at the gates, taxed all trades, and even the amusements of the people. Then their resentment found expression. At the festival of the Circensian games in September, the crowd was loud in its reproaches; Caius sent soldiers among them and hewed down the brawlers.

Still more serious was the estrangement of the soldiery. These had been favoured by him with liberal gifts as long as he had money. Then ensued his threat of massacre or decimation of the legions on the Rhine, and his flight when they showed symptoms of resistance. The comedy of his expedition against Britain had made him ridiculous in their eyes, and they blushed to serve under such an emperor. But his greatest folly was to fall out with the tribunes and captains of his body-guard—with those to whom was intrusted the safety of his person.

No man was more exasperated against him by wanton provocation than Cassius Chaerea, tribune of the guard. This man in his youth, in



FIG. 88.—CAIUS. Bust from the Polignac Collection, at Berlin.

A.D. 14, had been in the mutiny on the Rhine, and had shown therein his fidelity and his resolution. Since then he had grown grey in his service of the imperial family. Caius he had known and loved as 'Little Boots,' in the German camp, and had perhaps carried him as a child in his arms. Chaerea had been invested with the charge of collecting some of the taxes, and as he shrank from harsh measures in cases that appealed to mercy, he had been sharply reprimanded by Caius. Moreover, Chaerea had a shrill voice and a feminine intonation that provoked the mirth of the young tyrant, who delighted in mimicking it, and holding up the old tribune to the ridicule of his fellow-soldiers. It was this gross piece of insolence that stirred in Chaerea's heart the thoughts of revenge. He sounded the minds of others, and found that other men, even among the guard, were not averse to putting an end to the reign of tyranny. The chief officer was named Clemens. To him he spoke of the grievance that they, men of honour, should be employed as emissaries of the emperor in the perpetration of monstrous crimes. 'It is we,' he said, 'the officers of his body-guard, who are guilty of this state of affairs, when by a blow we could make an end of it.' Clemens answered that he was too old to enter on such an enterprise, and warned the tribune to be more cautious in his talk. Then he stood up and retired, leaving Chaerea in alarm lest he should betray the communication.

By some means, unexplained, a senator named Pompedius had learned the secret, and he, like a fool, whispered it to a beautiful actress, Quintilia, to whom he was attached, and it was speedily known to Chaerea that the girl was acquainted with the plot. Soon after he heard of the arrest of Pompedius, on another charge, and also that Quintilia was in the hands of the soldiers, and was being sent to him to be stretched on the rack, to force from her disclosures that might compromise Pompedius. His alarm was great, but the brave woman trod on his foot, and with a look assured him he might do his worst, and not a word would escape her lips. By orders of Caius Chaerea was forced so cruelly to rack Quintilia that her dislocation of joints aroused the compassion of Caius even, who discharged her with money, and Pompedius as well, against whom no evidence had been elicited.

Another tribune of the guards taken into the plot was Cornelius Sabinus. But there were others engaged in the conspiracy who belonged to the noble and moneyed classes, men who were infatuated with the idle dream of restoring the republic. Since the day of Philippi the image of the republic had lost much of its incongruity in the recollection of the Romans, and the more they felt their degeneracy and blushed at their subserviency, the more they were disposed to attribute it to the pressure of the hand laid on them, instead of admitting that the evil lay in the moral deterioration of the Roman character. In the rhetorical schools attended by the noble Roman youths, the

favourite themes for declamation were the vindication of the assassins of Caesar, the monologue of Cato of Utica, and the counsel given to Sulla to lay down the dictatorship. Literature had for a while preserved its independence, and history had maintained a republican tone till under Tiberius it had been repressed, and such historians as lived became laudatory of the regent. The books that had been placed under censure were, however, circulated in secret, and the men who had succumbed in the civil wars were invested with a halo they ill deserved. Brutus, Cato, Pompeius, were exalted into patterns of disinterested patriotism, and the highest glory to which a generous youth could aspire was to be like one of these. Thus the young men of Rome were filled with a fanatic enthusiasm for liberty, and if, with maturer years, they discovered that the stuff out of which republicans could be made did not exist in the commonwealth, yet there lingered on in the hearts of the men of ripe age a yearning after the grandeur and the independence of the former epoch in the history of their nation.

The *plebs urbana*, the city rabble that desired nothing save bread and games, furnished no material out of which to create good citizens; the senate, ever ready to act as the tools of the princes whom they hated yet adored, were devoid of the smallest element of statesmanlike faculty; the knights, the capitalists and usurers, were intent on their commercial pursuits, and were indifferent to the form of government so long as there were no commotions in the state to bring about financial crashes. The soldiers had no desire for a republic; the provinces abhorred the idea of a recurrence to the iniquitous and ruinous rule of the optimates. The praetorians who commanded the city were in agreement with the emperor. On whom could the republicans rely for the reconstruction of a free commonwealth? on the slaves and gladiators? That was the only force available, and to summon it to their aid was to subject Rome to the worst of dangers.

If it were impossible to set up the discredited and dead Oligarchic rule, there remained only the alternative of a change of ruler, and some of those who aimed at personal advancement through the death of the regent and the transfer of the sovereignty to another closely allied to themselves, disguised their ambition under a cloak of enthusiasm for republican ideals, and drew along with them accordingly all those fanatics who sought a revolution for the sake of setting up their ideal. Among these men was M. Annius Vinicianus, member of the College of the Arval brothers, and nephew of M. Vinicius, the husband of Julia Livilla, sister of Caligula.<sup>1</sup> He had been a personal friend of M. Aemilius Lepidus, and ever since the execution of Lepidus he had been in fear for himself. His uncle, M. Vinicius, had in his earlier years shown promptness and energy in chastising the Germans, but he was now a quiet unassuming man who did not interfere with politics, and

<sup>1</sup> Josephus calls him M. Minucianus; but this is a mistake.



who had not been banished along with his wife by Caius, as not even suspected of the treasonable projects in which she was involved.

Another who entered into the plot was Callistus, a freedman of Caius, who had amassed great wealth, and was afraid lest his master should think of despatching him in order to draw all this wealth to himself.

In the meantime, on January 1st (A.D. 41), Caligula entered on his fourth consulate, but resigned it on the 7th, and Q. Pomponius Secundus took his place. As colleague with Caius had been appointed Cn. Sentius Saturninus. The conspirators were without fixed purpose and void of courage, so that all the many occasions that had presented themselves for the execution of their plan were allowed to pass without advantage being taken of them.

A. U. C. 794.  
A. D. 41.  
Aet. 29.

Chaerea alone possessed nerve and resolution. The rest raised difficulties to the schemes proposed, and suggested others equally impossible. The only thing on which all were agreed was that the watchword by which they should know each other was to be 'Liberty.'

At length it was decided that the assassination of the tyrant should take place during the Palatine games, a festival appointed by Livia in honour of the founder of the monarchy. It began on the 17th January and lasted eight days, and in it the emperor and all the noblest Romans, together with their wives and children, took part. But whether Chaerea was to take occasion of Caius standing on a parapet of his palace raining gold down on the swarming multitudes in the forum, and by a thrust to precipitate him from the height, or whether the emperor was to be cut down when on the Capitol, offering a sacrifice for the welfare of his little daughter, or whether he was to be fallen upon when celebrating mysteries in the privacy of his palace, and by whom he was to be killed, this seems to have been left wholly undecided. The intention of Caius was known. Immediately on the conclusion of the games he was going to visit Alexandria, a city with which he was well pleased, because in it his divinity had been first proclaimed and accepted, and then he had resolved to retire to his native Antium, where, rumour said, he was about, as a second Romulus, to refound the city and make that the seat of empire.

Great preparations had been made for the games. A huge wooden theatre had been erected, probably at the point where is the easy descent from the Palatine between the house of the Vestals and the spot where now stands the arch of Titus. The festival was inaugurated by a sacrifice of a scarlet flamingo before the image of the great Augustus. As Caius performed this sacrifice, the blood of the bird spurted over him and over P. Nonius Asprenas, who had been consul in A.D. 38, and this provoked a burst of laughter from Caius. It was afterwards noticed that Asprenas was the first to fall after the murder of the emperor.

As Caius, attended by Chaerea and others, entered the senate-house

a voice was heard to cry: 'Finish what thou hast undertaken; seize the chance that comes to thy hand!' The tribune turned pale, thinking that his secret was betrayed, but soon rallied, and accepted the call as a divine intimation to proceed to the accomplishment of his purpose.

However, day after day passed and nothing was done. Each conspirator looked to the other, none sought to take the initiative, some shrank away altogether, with a fresh accession of fear lest one of their number might betray the plot. Chaerea saw that no hand could be trusted but his own. Already a Greek soothsayer had been brought before Caius, denounced to him as having foretold his death. The emperor, impatient to enjoy the games, postponed hearing him till their conclusion. A message reached him from the oracle at Antium, his native place, to beware of Cassius. 'Of what Cassius?' asked Caius, and his mind travelled to Cassius Longinus, proconsul of Asia, and he gave orders for his recall and impeachment.

The last day of the games arrived, and Caius was in unwonted good spirits at the prospect of his journey to Egypt. He noticed and laughed at the eagerness of the crowd to fill the theatre, which made them disregard the divisions separating the benches reserved for the knights from their own.

On that last day a succession of plays was to be performed, among which was the capture and crucifixion of a robber chief,<sup>1</sup> and after that the murder of the man who took the robber, and of his daughter. Much water dyed crimson was to be splashed about over the persons of the actors. But even this was not held to be sufficient. The chief actor, Mnester, had contrived means to simulate the breaking of a blood-vessel, and he was to pour blood from his mouth so that the stage should swim with the ruddy flood. Such were the revolting exhibitions that delighted a brutal populace, but not the lower classes only, nobles and knights and high ladies as well—in a word, the imperial court and the choicest society in Rome. The imperial box was on the right side of the stage. Behind the emperor sat Vatinius, captain of the praetorian guard, below him the consul, Pomponius, and near him was a man of consular rank, named Cluvius.

'How now, friend?' said the former, 'any news to-day?'

'None that I have heard,' answered Cluvius.

'Know then that the play to be enacted this day is the slaughter of a tyrant.'

'Hush, good friend,' whispered Cluvius; 'beware, lest others of the Achaeans hear thy tale.'

'And the day—what day is this?' asked a senator of another.

<sup>1</sup> This play, the 'Laureolus,' long held its own on the Roman stage. Juvenal refers to it, viii. 187. Martial tells us that this drama was performed to the life in the amphitheatre, a real malefactor being crucified, and real blood, not crimson water, poured forth.

‘It is that on which Philip of Macedon was slain by Pausanias, his friend—at the play,’ answered the second.

It is clear that the intended attempt was an open secret.

‘I had a dream last night,’ said Caius to those who sat about him, and the consul Pomponius, at his feet, held up an attentive ear. ‘Methought I stood before my brother Jupiter, in heaven, and he thrust at me with his big toe, and I fell—I fell to earth.’

Before the play began, fruit was thrown among the spectators, and also a number of rare and bright-plumaged birds were let loose, that they might be caught at by the people, and a scene of scramble and fisticuffs might provoke merriment.

In the orchestra stood an altar on which a fire burnt, and round it were grouped the dancers; but Caius was disappointed, some boys from Asia were expected who performed rare antics, and they had not as yet arrived.

As the performance took place in the depth of winter, it is impossible to suppose but that the theatre was closed in, and placed above a hypocaust to afford an agreeable temperature. The performance lasted for several hours, and neither the emperor nor the people could have endured the cold without some such provision. When darkness set in, the whole spectacle was to conclude with Tartarus opened—and scenes with fire in the nether world, and with real negroes engaged to act as attendant demons on Minos. A whisper ran through the theatre that Caesar himself was on this occasion to descend from his lodge and take part in the dramatic exhibition. It was possible that this was his intention. He had already astonished some consulars whom he sent for by night by flashing before them in spangles, and dancing and singing in theatrical guise.

At the feet of the emperor sat Pomponius Secundus, consul that year, and every now and then he stooped and kissed the gilded slippers of the prince, whilst sighing for liberty and the republic. Food was brought in, and Caius ate and passed refreshments to his companions. On the preceding days he had left the theatre and gone to the palace for his midday meal, but on this, the concluding day of the festival, he would lunch in his box. Chaerea, not thinking he would do this, had risen and left the theatre to make preparations to kill him as he was on his way to table. Vinicianus was uneasy. He also was seated near the prince. Finding that Caius had no intention of leaving, he rose to go after the tribune, find him and inform him of the fact. Caius looked round, and seeing him stand up laid hold of his gown, and said: ‘My good fellow, whither are you going?’ Vinicianus, abashed, reseated himself. But his anxiety left him no rest, and seizing a moment when the emperor’s attention was otherwise engaged, he slipped away. He encountered Chaerea at the door. The tribune had been waiting, and had made all arrangements. Faithful men, in whom he placed confidence, were

stationed as guards on the way. But as Caius did not return to the palace, he proposed to enter the imperial box and cut him down from behind. From this purpose the alarmed Vinicianus dissuaded him, by representing the tremendous commotion that would ensue, and the chance of a general fight and massacre. As they were thus talking, and turning to go back to the theatre, a messenger came out to say that Caesar was coming.

In fact the senator Asprenas, who was in the plot, had become uneasy likewise at the alteration in the plan of Caius. He sat near the emperor, and he had seen Vinicianus go out. He at once leaned over to the ear of Caius and suggested to him that he must be tired, that the great spectacle closing the performance could not take place till darkness had settled in, and that a bath and a meal would enable the prince to enjoy the scene with greater zest. Caius yielded to the suggestion and stood up. A procession was made, the way was led by dull old Claudius, the uncle of the emperor, and Marcus Vinicius, husband of his banished sister, Julia Livilla, and Valerius Asiaticus, a man in whose bosom rankled anger at a gross insult offered him by Caius, but he was not initiated into the plans of the conspirators. With the emperor up the hill walked Paullus Arruntius; Chaerea, Sabinus, and other officers of the guard attended him. Presently Caius halted and turned sharply to the right into the crypto-porticus, a long gallery that led to the bath-house, leaving his uncle and brother-in-law to ascend by the ordinary road. This passage is still in existence; after running some hundred yards in one direction it turns at right angles, where it falls in with a passage that led down by a flight of steps to the forum. The passage was lighted by *ceils-de-boeuf* from the left, and the walls and vault were richly painted. Here Caius encountered the party of boys from Greece and Asia Minor, who had been sent for to perform in the final scene. Caius stopped to speak to them, and was inclined to turn back with them at once and go to the theatre: his appetite was disordered by his supper the preceding night, and he did not care to eat. But the manager of the boys said that they were suffering from cold, and asked that they should be allowed first to warm themselves. Caius consented, and took a few steps forward. Then Chaerea approached him and asked for the watchword. The stageplayer boys were there. Caius attempted to raise a laugh among them at the cost of Chaerea, and he gave him an ugly word, imitating his treble pipe, and accompanying it with an insulting gesture. In a moment the old tribune's sword was raised, and he struck the emperor between the neck and the shoulder. The blow was arrested by his collar-bone. Caius staggered back, too amazed to cry out, but he attempted to run up the passage. He was caught by the hand of Cornelius Sabinus, who gave him a thrust, and he fell on his knees. A second blow cleft his jaw. He sank on the marble floor, drawing his limbs together to save his body, screaming, 'I am alive'



I am alive!' whilst the conspirators thronged about him, crying, 'Again! Again!' hacked him, and left him gashed with thirty wounds.

Then all dispersed, seeking their own safety.

The cries of the boys, and of some servants, roused the alarm of a German guard that Caius entertained, and on which he lavished much money. These tall fair-haired barbarians cared nought for the politics of Rome, but thought much of their duty to their master. They came pouring into the passage, now dark with the gathering shadows of the short winter day, and found there Asprenas, the senator. He was at once cut down; as they swept on, they lit on Norbanus, a noble, and suspecting that he was in the plot, slaughtered him. Then they caught a senator, Anteiui, standing by the body of their master, he had run up to gloat his eyes on the corpse of the tyrant who had put his father to death. He also was slain. Then, tramping on, the guard descended to the theatre and surrounded it. Thither, in the meantime, a report had come that Caius had been killed. Few credited it; to some the tidings were too good to be true. Others feared that it was set afloat in order to trick the people, and that the monster would suddenly appear among them and chastise them for unseemly exultation.

Some exclaimed that they would go; others that it was safest to stay. Presently certain who had been silently attempting to escape came back with blank faces, to say that the wild Germans had formed a ring round the theatre, and refused to allow any one to pass. Then the commotion, the panic became overwhelming; women shrieked, and children cried. Some of the soldiers present on their benches drew their swords; the slaves began to cluster in knots and arm themselves with whatever was available. But the senators, the nobles, the knights, sat paralysed with terror. No doubt the negroes and the half-dressed demons who were to appear in the final performance, ran out on the blood and paint-bespattered stage. A surgeon, named Alcyon, with Greek cunning succeeded in passing himself and some friends through the encircling ring, on the plea that he had been summoned to attend the wounded prince, and he took his assistants with him.

The most incredible rumours swept through the ranges of seats. It was declared that Caius had been wounded, but was in the physician's hands. Then it was said that the emperor, drenched in blood, had escaped from his murderers, and was in the market-place haranguing the people.

The Germans now began to fill the theatre, and the uproar became excessive, all crying and protesting their innocence, beating their faces, tearing their hair, and crowding on the Germans with entreaties to be merciful. Then in came three soldiers, bearing on their pikes the heads of the three men they had put summarily to death, and threw them on the altar in the pit. This produced a moment's lull. The public crier, a man of strong voice, seized the occasion. Hastily snatching from the

wardrobe of the theatre the most mournful habit he could find, he wrapped it about his person, and standing forward on the stage, in thundering tones roared out the announcement that Caius was in very truth dead; then, addressing the German guards, he bade them beware how they committed any violence, for the senate was now in power, and would certainly take account of any such conduct. Some of the tribunes joined him, and by this means allayed the anger of the rude soldiers. Promises of largess entirely assuaged it; for, as Josephus shrewdly informs us, they argued in their own minds that, Caius being actually dead, there was nothing to be got by further display of fidelity to him, whereas something satisfactory might drop to them were they to sheath their swords. The people were now suffered to leave the theatre. The senators at once assembled for consultation as to the steps to be taken in the crisis, and the people surged about the forum, and rushed on this or that man, pretending that they were hunting for the murderers of the emperor. Then Valerius Asiaticus mounted the rostrum and addressed the people. It was certainly true, said he, that the Caesar was dead; he had been killed. Who were the murderers? was the question they were asking. He did not know; but there was one thing he did know: 'I wish I had been the man.'

He was followed by the consuls, who ordered the mob to disperse, and the soldiers to return to their barracks. To the people they gave hopes of remission of taxation, and promised to the soldiers a gift of money if they refrained from disturbing the public peace. The senate, they said, were in consultation for the restoration of pristine Liberty. With these words the people were somewhat appeased, but the military retired altogether dissatisfied, for they had no desire to see the Republic reinstated in its ancient form.

In the senate, Cneius Sentius Saturninus, consul that year, after having returned from the rostrum, addressed the conscript fathers in a vehement oration, in which he congratulated them on the fact that the recovery of liberty was now in their power, and he urged them to seize the occasion without delay. He moved that public honours should be decreed to the men who had ridded Rome of an intolerable burden. Then up started one Trebellius Maximus, and snatched a signet ring from the hand with which Saturninus had been gesticulating. 'See!' he exclaimed, 'the head of Caius is engraved thereon.' At once there rose a shout, and the ring was pounded to atoms under the feet of the senators.

Chaerea came forward and asked the consul what was to be the watchword. 'Liberty!' was the reply. The tribune at once retired to give the word to the soldiers. He found that he could count on four regiments only, the rest were sullen and dissatisfied, and refused to accept orders from the senate.

Chaerea now returned to the palace. He was not easy. Caesonia,

the wife, and Julia, the daughter of the tyrant, were alive; the latter still an infant. One would hardly have supposed that danger could have been apprehended from them; but the dissatisfaction of the military made Chaerea suspicious, and he thought it possible that they might rally about this woman and her child. He therefore resolved on their destruction. He held a consultation with some of the conspirators, and it is satisfactory to learn that few of them approved of using severity towards these unfortunates. Some were found to agree with Chaerea, and urged that Caesonia had instigated Caius to his worst crimes. This again was denied. Chaerea, to cut the dispute short, despatched Julius Lupus, a tribune, to kill the mother and her child. Lupus found the unhappy Caesonia lying on the pavement by the dead husband, clasping his body, drenched in his blood, and reproaching him in her madness of despair for not having attended to her advice. The babe lay also there, in its father's blood. The lamentation of Caesonia was variously interpreted. Some believed that she meant that she had vainly endeavoured to dissuade Caius from his severities, others that she had obtained information of the conspiracy, and had exhorted him to arrest and put to death all those who were in it. When she saw the soldier coming down the subterranean passage, torch in one hand and sword in the other, she raised herself somewhat, and seeing at once that her life was required, she staggered to her knees, presented her neck to him, and bade him not boggle over his task. He dealt her the fatal blow, and then despatched the sobbing child by dashing out its brains against the wall.

Such was the end of Caius, the 'Little Boots,' the pet of the soldiers on the Rhine. He died on January 24th, at the age of twenty-eight years, four months, and twenty-four days, after having reigned three years, ten months, and eight days.

His body was rescued from insult by Herod Agrippa, who secretly, in the general panic and confusion, removed it to a bed, covered it with clothes, and then ran out to announce that the emperor was still breathing, and bade his attendants haste for physicians.<sup>1</sup>

Afterwards he removed it to a garden belonging to the Lamian gens, a banker family on the Esquiline, and there it was partially burnt and buried. 'It was afterwards disinterred by his sisters, on their return from banishment, consumed completely, and buried. Till this was done, the gardeners were greatly disturbed by apparitions. Not a night passed without some terrible alarm, moreover, in the house where he was slain, and this continued till a fire broke out and consumed it.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was probably through the attendants on Herod that the very minute and graphic account of the conspiracy and murder reached Josephus. His narrative is far fuller than those of Dio and Suetonius.

<sup>2</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 59.

## VI.—PORTRAITS.

*Busts and Statues.*

1. The dark-green basalt bust in the Capitoline Museum is incomparably the finest. The genuineness of this bust has been disputed on insufficient grounds. Mouth and brows not parallel. Head turned to the right, with a scowl on the face, due to epileptic distortion. The brows form a horizontal line. The toughness and hardness of the stone account for the admirable preservation. This bust is really that which is typical, and by which others have been identified. The medals, though not disagreeing with it, are not sufficiently good to enable us to fix by them the features of Caligula. This bust has in it distinct reminiscences of Augustus and of Agrippa, the two great-grandfathers. A renaissance sculptor would not have made the mouth and brows run as they do. (Fig. 83.)

2. A marble bust in the Capitoline Museum, Upper Gallery, No. 69. Head turned to the right, and unquestionably the same person as that represented in green basalt. Half the nose and two little patches new. These two portraits form what Bernoulli calls the Capitoline type.

3. Bust in the Lateran (No. 211), found at Cervetri in 1846. A deviation from the Capitoline type, and apparently taken before the illness of Caligula, after which he assumed his menacing expression. It is a pathetic bust. There is but a slight frown, but this is caused by the eyes being turned upwards, and the brows drawn together to screen the eyeballs from the glare of light. Bernoulli says, 'Apparently a different person from the Capitoline.' I do not agree with him. To my eye it is the same man, but with a different expression. The nose and brow have the line observable in Agrippa, and the lower lip is abruptly curled as in the Capitoline busts.

4. Bust in the Villa Albani (No. 633), with veil over the back of the head; this follows the Capitoline type, and has strong reminiscences of Augustus.

5. Head at Florence (Fig. 82), head turned sharply to the right. Follows the Capitoline type. The draped bust is modern, the head probably ancient, though suspicions have been cast on it, and chiefly because it resembles the Capitoline head; but it resembles it with a difference, and is no servile copy.

6. Bronze bust at Turin, head turned sharply to the right. This follows the Capitoline type, and is of unquestionable genuineness, though it is not known where it was found. (Fig. 86.)

7. Statue in the Louvre (No. 37). The head does not belong to the body, for which it is much too small. Found at Gabii. Though not of the Capitoline type, it is the portrait of the same person at a more advanced age, or in a condition of further moral deterioration that in a few years has prematurely oldened him. The top of the head is low.



8. Statue found at Minturnae in armour; now in Naples; found in 1787. Certainly of the same character as the Capitoline, but of very inferior workmanship. Head not turned, scowl, closed lips. Much patched and restored. (Fig. 87.)

9. A beautiful statue of Caligula as a boy, in the Torlonia gallery; found at Marino. It is in Greek marble and of admirable workmanship. He holds in his left hand a roll, and at his feet is a *scrinium*. He wears the *toga praetextata*, and the *bullae* round his neck. It is difficult to say without very close scrutiny how much is old and how much modern in this as well as in other statues in the Torlonia gallery, as the late prince had an unfortunate passion for patching and polishing up all his specimens till they looked like works just turned out of a studio.

10. Bust in the Torlonia Gallery (No. 524), differs from the Capitoline type. It is a bust of little merit; nose new.

11. Bust at Berlin in white marble. From the Polignac collection. This bust has been reworked, but is nevertheless interesting as it gives us the face of Caius when besotted with repeated epileptic attacks, and indulgence of every sort; the flabby muscles, the puffed features, are characteristic of softening of the brain. There is hardly any artistic value in this bust as we now have it, and it is regarded as an imitation antique. It differs so much from the general type that this is hardly probable. (Fig. 88.)

12. Bust of the young Caius at Richmond. (Michaelis, *Anc. Marbles*, p. 625.)

13. Naked statue of Caius as a boy, at Stockholm, with head wreathed with laurels, and *chlamys* thrown back. Lower portion of the limbs new.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Cameos and Intaglios.*

1. Two cameos resembling the heads on the coins, in the Uffizi, at Florence. A yellow agate with his head. None of these very important.

2. Sardonyx with head of Caligula and a female face, either Drusilla or Caesonia, facing him, in the Cabinet des Médailles at Paris. (Engr in Mongez, pl. 25, 8.)

3. Sardonyx also there, with Caligula inscribed over it, and the heads of his three sisters beneath. (Engr. by Lenormant, xi. 14.)

4. Onyx at Vienna. (Engr. Bernoulli, pl. xxvi. 13.)

5. Cameo in the collection Wallmoden. (Engr. Bernoulli, pl. xxvi. 12.)

6. Sardonyx, Caius with wreath of laurels, and Drusilla or Caesonia. (Engr. Bernoulli, xxvii. 11.)

<sup>1</sup> The equestrian statue in the British Museum has a modern head. The statue in the Vatican, called Caligula, found at Otricoli, is certainly Augustus. The busts at Berlin are: one Renaissance work, the other old but fresh tooled over. That at Wilton, with an elephant on the breast-plate, is hardly ancient.

# CLAUDIUS

## I.—AFTER THE MURDER.

No sooner had the tidings of the death of Caius spread through the palace than a panic seized the servants and all belonging to the imperial house. Claudius, the uncle of Caligula, had, as we have seen, gone up the road from the theatre, the emperor had been behind, and had turned out of the road to enter the subway to the palace along with Paullus Arruntius; but Claudius and his companions, M. Vinicius and Valerius Asiaticus were perhaps unaware of this till the noise of alarm, the cries of the victims, and the shouts of the guards informed them that some event of moment had taken place. Claudius had already entered the palace; he at once concealed himself behind a portière to a door, and peering between the curtains saw the Germans rush past bearing the bloody heads of the men they had murdered. When the soldiers left for the theatre he did not venture from his hiding-place. Presently an Epeiroi guardsman named Gratus came that way, and noticing a pair of feet below the curtain drew it aside and disclosed Claudius, who in a paroxysm of terror threw himself on the ground and implored that his life might be spared. Gratus recognising him, cried out, 'Here also is a Germanicus,' at once saw his opportunity, and ran for some of his fellows. They threw Claudius into a litter—his servants had dispersed—and conveyed him on their shoulders to the barracks. The populace, who filled all the streets and squares, at first supposed he was being carried to execution and commiserated him, but when they learned the real state of the case, broke forth into shouts of applause and cries of 'Salve Imperator!'

Meanwhile the consuls had seized the helm of the pilotless state, and believing the moment auspicious for the restoration of the Republic had summoned the senate to assemble in the Capitol. These consuls were Cn. Sentius Saturninus,<sup>1</sup> and Q. Pomponius Secundus. Pomponius had been impeached under Tiberius, but had escaped death, and he had cringed to Caligula to the last hour of his life, when he stooped, in public, in the theatre to kiss his gilded slippers.

<sup>1</sup> Sentius was either the governor of Syria who had been appointed by Germanicus in the room of Piso, and had by force of arms compelled Piso to abandon his attempt to retain his government, or he was the son of that man. It cannot be said with any certainty which.



FIG. 89.—CLAUDIUS. Seated Figure, found at Herculaneum; Mus. Nation., Naples.

For the first time for a hundred years the consuls gave on this occasion the pass-word, and they gave it to Chaerea. It was 'Liberty,' and having received it the tribune rushed off to order the murder of Caesonia and the infant child of Caius. That was what he understood by 'liberty.'

But whilst the fathers of the Commonwealth consulted in the Capitol, they heard the cheers of the mob below, as the litter of Claudius was carried through the forum, and they recognised immediately that their scheme for the setting up of the Republic was futile. Their endeavour now was to take the nomination of the emperor in their own hands. For this purpose they sent a deputation, at the head of which were the tribunes of the people, Veranius and Brocchus, into the camp of the praetorian guard to entreat Claudius to place his claims in the hands of the senate, and not to owe his election to the voices of the military. They represented to him that he had experienced great danger under the late reign, that a monarchy was a menace to all, and that if he would submit to the counsel of the senate he would receive from them the highest honours, and would escape the dangers that must arise should a struggle ensue between the praetorians and those soldiers who were under the authority of the senate, and who were ready to fly to arms at their call. These representations were calculated to arouse all the terrors of Claudius, a man without moral or physical courage. But at this decisive moment the scale was turned by the advice of the Jewish prince, Agrippa, who had been the friend for many years of the newly proclaimed Emperor.

As this man used his influence so decisively at this critical moment, and as he has also been mentioned as exercising a powerful and baneful influence on the preceding emperor, it will be as well here to give a slight sketch of his career.

Aristobulus, the father of Agrippa, a son of Herod the Great, had been put to death by order of his father. The mother of Agrippa, Berenice, was the sister's daughter of Herod the Great, and she had been an intimate friend of Antonia. Moreover, Claudius and Agrippa were born in the same year. Agrippa received his education at the Roman court, and lived on familiar terms with Drusus, the son of Tiberius, and with Claudius. After the death of Berenice he plunged into great extravagance and involved himself in debts. When Drusus died, and he saw that no assistance was to be obtained from Tiberius, the disordered state of his finances obliged him to leave Rome. He returned to the East, and to Idumaea, in such a state of depression of spirits that his wife, Cypros, a granddaughter of Herod the Great, was in alarm lest he should make away with himself; she therefore addressed herself to Herodias, sister of Agrippa and wife of the tetrarch, Herod of Galilee and Peraea, and at her urgency the tetrarch



summoned his kinsman to Tiberias and allotted to him a certain income for his support.

But before long, at a banquet at Tyre, Herod and Agrippa quarrelled, and the latter was forced to leave. He sought the consular, L. Pomponius Flaccus, who was now governor of Syria, and whose acquaintance he had made in Rome. By this man he was well received, and he remained a while with him, but shortly after was convicted of having taken a bribe from the Damascenes, who wished to purchase his influence with the proconsul, and he was again compelled to fly.

He reached Ptolemais, and there resolved (A.D. 36) to go to Rome, as he was unable to live elsewhere, having no available means. His freedman, Marsyas, was required to raise some money, and he borrowed from a Jew, who had formerly been in the service of Berenice, the sum of 17,500 Attic drachmas, on which he was obliged to give his I.O.U for 20,000. With this money he made his way to Anthedon in Phoenicia, intending thence to take ship, but he was immediately arrested by the procurator, Capito, for a sum of money which he owed to the treasury. The procurator laid his hands on the money so hardly and recently acquired, but by some means Agrippa managed to escape. Agrippa reached Alexandria, where he met his wife, and she succeeded in raising 200,000 drachmas from the Alabarch, partly in gold, partly in bills on Puteoli. Agrippa then sailed for Rome, while Cypros with the children returned to Judaea.

When the Jewish prince reached Puteoli, he sent to ask Tiberius permission to wait on him at Capreae. His request was granted, and he was received with favour, and was well treated till the report of the procurator Capito reached the emperor. Tiberius then refused to see him further till he had refunded the sum he owed to the treasury. In his difficulties Agrippa turned to Antonia, his mother's friend, and this kind and generous woman at once furnished him with the requisite sum.

Tiberius again received him, and Agrippa succeeded in gaining his confidence to such an extent that he intrusted him with the guardianship of his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus. However, the calculating eye of the Jewish prince marked out Caius as the future emperor, and, partly out of gratitude to Antonia, but mainly out of self-interest, he attached himself to her grandson. Then he borrowed a large sum of money from the freedman, Thallus of Samaria, repaid Antonia, and spent the rest in gaining the favour of Caius, who was kept very short of money by his frugal uncle. But it was precisely this relation which brought Agrippa into renewed difficulties. One of his freedmen, Eutychus, had stolen some clothes, and was whipped for it; he took to flight, was arrested, and declared to the prefect of the city that he had State secrets he could divulge.

This proved to be a conversation he had overheard between his

master and Caius in a chariot—the story has already been told—when Agrippa said it was high time that the old fellow departed this world and that Caius was in his place—with a hint that Gemellus should be got rid of in true oriental fashion.

This led to the arrest of Agrippa, and he was retained in confinement till the death of Tiberius. The first act of Caius on his accession was to liberate his friend, and to invest him with the royal title and diadem, and give him the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias. Caius, however, valued the society and opinions of the Idumæan too highly to allow him to leave Rome at once for his kingdom. It was not till the second year of the reign of Caius that he was suffered to depart. On reaching his realm, Herod Antipas formed a plan to obtain his ruin, but Agrippa appealed against him to Caius, and Herod was banished to Lugdunum, and his tetrarchy added to the dominions of Agrippa.

For some reason not explained Agrippa returned to Rome, and was on the Palatine at the time of the murder of his friend Caius. He it was who rescued the body and laid it on a bed, and pretended that the emperor was still alive. Hearing soon after of what had befallen Claudius, he hastened to the praetorian camp. There he found his companion in youth full of alarm for his life, and dazed with the change in his fortunes and the uncertainty connected with it. The urgency of Agrippa to grasp with firm hand the sceptre fallen to him, and not to allow himself to be befooled by an impotent senate, sufficiently encouraged the frightened and irresolute man to refuse the proposition made by the deputies of the senate. Thereupon these deputies, alarmed for their own safety by the threatening aspect of the military, threw themselves at the feet of Claudius, and implored him, if he must be emperor, to accept the *imperium* from the senate and not from the soldiers. But even this was refused by Claudius, prompted thereto, doubtless, by Agrippa. He pretended that in the camp he was not his own master to go where he pleased.

The messengers of the senate returned to those who had commissioned them with the account of their failure. This produced general consternation. The senators resolved to send for Agrippa, and invite him to use his influence to persuade Claudius to concession.

Shortly after the departure of the tribunes of the people, the king had left the camp, and the delegates encountered him on his way, and conducted him into the senate. He appeared dressed as for a banquet, for, indeed, he was to have supped with Caius after the theatrical performances, and had not had time or thought to change his garb. He pretended to know nothing of what had taken place, and when the senators explained to him their wishes, he, with much composure and trenchant good sense, told them that they were incapable of carrying them into effect. On one side stood the veterans armed, resolute; on the other side—what?

Then, to relieve the minds of those who heard him, he praised his friend Claudius, whom he had known from childhood, as a man 'who would not exercise sovereignty like a tyrant,' and assured the fathers of his readiness, if they still wished it, to act as an intermediary between them and Claudius.

The helpless senators, after a little heroic bluster about their confidence in the troops that were subject to their orders, and about the righteousness of their cause, yielded everything in accepting Agrippa's offer to negotiate. They knew the man. It was he—and he above all—who had been the evil counsellor to Caius. He, as all Rome believed, had been the teacher, the prompter of Caius in his most wanton acts of tyranny<sup>1</sup>—and yet they asked this man to invite Claudius to lay down the sovereignty thrust upon him and become a servant of the senate.

This was a confession of impotence. When the new embassy arrived in the camp on the Quirinal, Agrippa disengaged himself from those associated with him so as to have a private conference with Claudius, and to put into his mouth the answers he was to give to the delegates. Accordingly, after the new emperor had listened to what was said, he assumed the tone recommended by his friend: he promised not to rule like the last Caesar, but to exercise great moderation. He protested that his own wishes were in accordance with those of the senate, but, said he, his primary object must be to avoid a sanguinary conflict. Then, by moonlight, the soldiers passed before him and took the oath of allegiance, and in return received from him a promise of a liberal reward.

Before daybreak the consuls summoned the fathers to fresh consultation in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, where they had met the preceding evening, but only a hundred put in an appearance. All the rest had fled to their villas to take precautions for their personal security.

When the Vigiles, the city police, heard this, they clamoured for the election of an emperor. The mob in the forum took up the cry. But nothing was done. The senate in assembly were without resolution, and full of mistrust. The day was spent in gesticulations, harangues, the putting of motions that were negatived, and the only thing they could have done to save appearances—the formal election of Claudius—was left undone. But two elderly senators, M. Annius Vinicianus and P. Valerius Asiaticus, offered themselves as candidates for the empty throne. This roused angry opposition, and in this Rump parliament neither could obtain a majority.

In the meantime, the praetorians dispersed through the city showed the gold they had received, and the Vigiles, in whom the senate had proclaimed their confidence,—a body made up of freedmen, and the

<sup>1</sup> Dio. lix. 24.

soldiers of the Palatine guard, the sailors of the fleet, all went over with their colours to the side of Claudius. It was in vain that Chaerea protested that they were placing on the throne an idiot in place of a madman. The soldiers thought only of the prizes that would be theirs, and went to the camp to swear allegiance.

Evening was drawing in. The senate saw that the game was lost; it was now a scramble who should be first with the new prince. Each senator hurried as fast as his legs could bear him up the Quirinal hill to tender his most abject homage to the 'idiot' whom the soldiers had placed on the throne. The guards, however, were unwilling to suffer them to approach their emperor, knowing very well that they had been in council all day to oppose his proclamation, and mistrusting their intentions. They elbowed and kicked the conscript fathers away; some were severely hurt, and the consul Pomponius was threatened with death. Then Agrippa advised his friend to interfere, and Claudius requested that no disrespect should be shown to such as came to salute him. Claudius now appointed Rubrius Pollio to the command of the guards, and ordered the arrest of those officers who were implicated in the murder of Caius. He was conveyed to the palace in a litter, under guard, and the senate was summoned to assemble in the imperial palace, there formally to accept the nominee of the soldiers. This was accordingly done; the titles that had been accumulated on his predecessors were heaped on Claudius, and he accepted all but that of Father of his Country, which he would not receive till he had merited it, and that of Imperator, which he did not deserve, never having been engaged in any military expedition.

## II.—THE YOUTH OF CLAUDIUS.

CLAUDIUS was born at Lugdunum (Lyons) on the 1st August B.C. 10. He was the youngest child of Drusus, brother of Tiberius, and he was brother of Germanicus. His mother was Antonia, the daughter of the triumvir, Mark Antony, by Octavia, sister of Augustus. His name in full was Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero. He lost his father the year

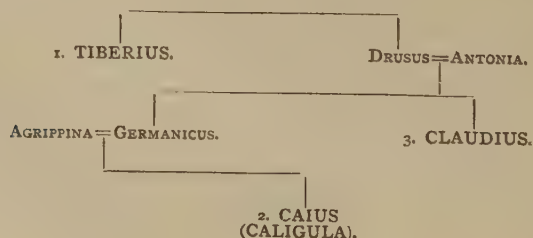






FIG. 90.—CLAUDIUS. Statue in the Vatican, Nuovo Braccio, No. 117.

after he was born, and then Antonia returned with her three children to Rome, and lived in a palace there which afterwards bore her name. Notwithstanding her youth and the urgency of Augustus that she would marry again, Antonia preferred to remain a widow and watch the education of her children. As daughter of his beloved sister Octavia, she stood by birth closely allied to the imperial house, and her marriage with Drusus had bound this tie still closer. Moreover, as she was at the same time daughter-in-law of Livia and sister-in-law of Tiberius, she served as a link between the rival houses, and she sought by no means to attach herself to one party, but to endeavour to conciliate both.

In the imperial household her position cannot have been an easy one, for the antagonism between the Julian and the Claudian members became daily more acute, and it is possible that the distress caused by this strife is what has marked the countenance of Antonia—in itself sweet, though hardly beautiful—with a look of unhappiness that never left it.

Germanicus, her eldest son, was handsome, popular in his manners, and favourably regarded by Augustus. Quite the opposite to Germanicus in every point was the brother, Claudius, thirteen years his junior. This prince's childhood had been one of sickness of body and intellectual feebleness. Till he grew to man's estate he seems to have fallen from one malady into another. This extreme delicacy would in our days attach the parents most closely to the feeble, fragile little life, but such a feeling is entirely a product of Christianity which has wrought in us a love, a reverence for weakness and pain.

It is not so among the beasts; it was not so among the ancients. In classic times a delicate child was regarded as a burden, of which the parents would gladly be rid. What made the lot of the boy the more unhappy, was that he was so closely allied to the reigning family. In a house of which every member strove to impress on his contemporaries that this house was derived from a divine origin, that was overshadowed by divine protection; one in which the marvellous beauty of its members seemed a proof of descent from Venus, and its marvellous success an evidence of a protecting providence, in such a house the bodily feeble and mentally defective boy was out of place. His mother—noble and pure though she was—showed him no love, and called him 'a human monster, begun by nature, and never finished.' When she was speaking of some excessively foolish man, she would say, 'He is more stupid even than my son Claudius.' She could find interest and pleasure in petting a lamprey at her villa in Bauli, and in adorning it with gold ear-rings,<sup>1</sup> but not in the forlorn child to which she had given birth.

Livia, his grandmother, treated Claudius with like disregard. She hardly ever condescended to speak to him, and when she had to com-

<sup>1</sup> The same villa possessed formerly by Hortensius, where he also had petted a lamprey, and cried his eyes out when it died.



FIG. 91.—ANTONIA. Statue in the Louvre.

municate with him, did so in writing, or through a servant, and then in short and severe terms. His sister Livilla, on once hearing that he might possibly be called hereafter to power, exclaimed loudly at the unworthy fate of the Roman people to fall under so despicable a governor.

Suetonius has preserved some letters of Augustus relative to him, that show us how troubled the emperor was at the deficiencies of his great-nephew. 'I have had some conversation with Tiberius,' he wrote to his wife, 'according to your desire, my dear Livia, as to what must be done with your grandson Tiberius (Claudius) at the games of Mars. We have both come to the same conclusion, that we must finally determine what course is to be taken with him. For if he be really sound, and—so to say—right in his wits, why should we hesitate to promote him by the same steps and stages by which we advanced his brother (Germanicus)? But if we find him below the average and defective in mind as in body, we must avoid the chance of making both him and ourselves objects of ridicule to the world, which is always prone to seize on such subjects for mirth and derision. It will be a never-ending worry if we have to debate over each several occasion for his promotion as it arises, and it is best to settle once for all whether the fellow is fit to take a public office or not. As to the matter you consult me about now—whether I object to his appearing as superintendent of the priests in the games of Mars,—I allow it, if he will suffer himself to be ruled by his kinsman, the son of Silanus, so as to do nothing to make folk stare and laugh. But I do not approve of his witnessing the Circensian games from the Pulvinar. He would there be exposed to public view in the very front of the theatre. Nor do I wish that he should go to the Alban Mount, or be in Rome at the Latin festival; for folks will say, if he be allowed to attend his brother to the Alban Mount, why is he not made praefect of the city? So now, my dear Livia, you have my ideas on this matter. In my opinion, we ought to settle this affair once for all, that we may not be always in suspense. You may, if you like, let your kinswoman Antonia read this part of my letter.'

In another letter Augustus wrote: 'I will invite the young fellow, Tiberius (Claudius), every day to supper during your absence, that he may not sup alone with his friends Sulpicius and Athenodorus. I do wish the poor creature were more particular and careful in the choice of friends, whose manners, airs, and gait were more proper for imitation—

'In things important he most sadly fails.'

When his mind does not ramble, his disposition is good.'

In a third letter Augustus wrote: 'May I perish, my dear Livia, if I am not amazed at being pleased with the declamation of your grandson, Tiberius (Claudius). How he, who slouches about so uncouthly, should be able to make a speech clearly and to the purpose, is a marvel to me.'

The appearance of Claudius was not prepossessing, as we may judge



from a description given of him late in life :—‘ Either sitting or standing, but especially when he lay asleep, his appearance was majestic and graceful ; for he was tall, though not slender. His grey locks became him well, and he had a full neck. But his knees were feeble, and failed him when walking, so that his gait was ungainly, both when he assumed state, and when he was taking diversion. He was outrageous in his laughter, and still more so in his wrath, for then he slobbered at the mouth and nostrils. He also stammered in his speech, and had a tremulous motion of the head at all times, but particularly when he was engaged in any business, however trifling. He dragged his right foot. His eyes were blue, but bloodshot. As he stammered, and ideas or emotions rose faster than he could give them expression, he used violent and often grotesque actions to assist in making his words intelligible. And when he was excited his head rolled about from side to side, his voice became hoarse, and he roared like a wild beast.’

It is easy to imagine such a man in his earlier days, stumbling about, getting in the way of his kinsfolk, saying things he ought not to say ; not without a pleasant face indeed, but so ill-built, and so clumsy in manner, and so lacking in quickness of apprehension, that he became the despair of his relatives. He was therefore kept in the background. At the gladiatorial show which Germanicus and he gave in the year B.C. 6 in memory of their father, he was allowed to appear, but only muffled in a cloak so as to conceal his infirmity, and on the occasion of his assuming the garb of manhood, he was conveyed by night in a close litter to the Capitol, and the investment was hurried through without ceremony.

Claudius was placed for a long time in his boyhood, and even after he had assumed the toga, under the tutorship of a wretched pedagogue, whom he himself complained of in a biography he wrote, as ‘ a barbarous wretch, formerly superintendent of the mule-drivers, who was selected as my tutor, that he might correct me sharply on every trifling occasion.’

This unfortunate, despised and neglected boy had a heart warmly alive to any kindness shown to him. Many years after, when he was emperor, and a certain candidate for the quaestorship was supported by his influence, he gave as his reason for his support : ‘ His father once handed me a draught of cold water when I was sick.’ Once when he brought a woman forward as witness in some trial before the senate, he said, ‘ She was my mother’s freedwoman and her dresser, but she always behaved to me with respect, as her master. I say this because there are some of my own family even now who do not look upon me with regard.’

The coldness he received from his relations threw him for companionship upon inferiors ; these were freedmen and slaves. Moreover, the harshness with which he was treated produced shyness and timidity

among his equals and superiors. Had his mother and the young men of the family encouraged him and treated him kindly, he might have got over some of his awkwardnesses and uncouth manners; but thrown among inferiors, he was allowed to deteriorate in his habits, and never acquired that dignity of manner which a member of the imperial house was expected to wear. Association with servants had another bad effect on him. They encouraged his baser propensities, humoured his weaknesses, and for their own advantage preyed on his fears, so as to make of him a mere puppet in their hands. Thus by degrees Claudius lost all independence of character, and throughout his life learned to depend for his opinions and for his guidance on those who immediately surrounded him. We have seen from one of the letters of Augustus that this association of Claudius with inferiors was distasteful to him as head of the family; but this was the fault of the family, not of Claudius: the family had elbowed him out of the parlour into the servants' hall.

And yet Claudius was not quite the fool his mother and the rest of the family thought him. Excluded from offices of state, he took up literary pursuits, studied antiquities with zest, and strove to make himself a name with his pen. He worked at his literary pursuits 'with energy.' He did not retire to rest till after midnight, and rose early, to return to his books. Encouraged by the historian Livius, he attempted the composition of a history of the Roman people from the death of Julius Caesar. Having got some little way with it, he invited a number of friends to meet at his house and hear what he had written, and pronounce their judgment upon it. He began to read; but partly owing to his stammering tongue, partly to his manuscript being full of erasures and corrections, he got on very badly with it. Presently the lecture was interrupted by a crash and exclamations. A very fat man was among those invited, and under his weight the bench on which he sat gave way and precipitated him on the mosaic floor. This not only occasioned great laughter among the audience, but it so tickled the humour of the reader, that after order was restored, he was unable to continue for more than a sentence or two without a fresh explosion of laughter, and the company broke up without having heard very much of the history of the Roman people.

Somewhat later, when he had carried on his work to the conclusion of the civil wars, he showed it to his mother and grandmother; but he had been too truthful in his record, and had told things that they desired to have forgotten, and they counselled him to suppress his work.

'Periculosae plenum opus aleae  
Tractas et incedis per ignes  
Suppositos cineri doloso.'

He published a defence of Cicero against Asinius Gallus, who had written an attack on the character of the great orator, and Cicero, it

must be admitted, had laid himself open to much hostile criticism. As Asinius Gallus was a man against whom Tiberius felt much bitterness, we may suspect that this defence of Cicero was written with the hopes of obtaining the favour of Tiberius. If so, the author did not gain his object, for Tiberius never gave him any office. He wrote likewise a history of the Etruscans, the loss of which we may well regret; likewise one of the Carthaginians, and a biography of himself, which would unquestionably have been of the greatest interest had it been preserved, though Suetonius speaks of it disparagingly as better in style than the matter deserved. He also composed a Greek comedy and a treatise on dice-playing, with both of which we can well dispense. At the death of Augustus, Claudius was in his twenty-first year, and if he expected a fitting acknowledgment in the will of the late emperor as some atonement for the slights put upon him, he was disappointed. Augustus named him only in the third class of legatees, with those but distantly allied to himself, giving him a trifling legacy. Claudius did not, however, abandon hopes of preferment; not only was he born on the festival of Spes, and on the anniversary of the taking of Alexandria, and on the day when the first altar was erected to the divinity of Augustus, but his own Claudian family was now advanced in the person of Tiberius, his father's brother, and he might well hope that honours would fall in abundance to him.

The equestrian order, to which he belonged—for he did not even rank as a senator,—had chosen him as their representative at the funeral of Augustus, and the knights did not fail to lay aside their cloaks when he entered the theatre, as a token of respect; and the senate ordered the rebuilding of his house at the public cost, when it was accidentally burnt down. But when the senate went further, and desired that Tiberius should allow him to vote in the rank of the consulars, the emperor refused, alleging as his reason the mental incapacity of his nephew, and promised to make the disappointment good to him by a grant of money from his own private income. Claudius, not discouraged, entreated to be given some appointment, but the prince in reply granted him the honorary appendages of a consular, the lictors with their fasces, and sent him forty gold pieces for his fairings and merry-makings during the ensuing festival of the Saturnalia. 'Upon this,' says Suetonius, 'laying aside all hope of advancement, he resigned himself entirely to an indolent life, living in great privacy, one while in his gardens, or in a villa which he had near the city; another while in Campania, where he passed his time in the lowest society, wherefore he got the character of being a drunkard and a gamester in addition to that which he had before, of being a dullard and a clown.'

In the beginning of the year A.D. 20, Agrippina arrived in Italy with the ashes of Germanicus, and Claudius and Drusus, the son of Tiberius, met her at Tarracina, and accompanied her to Rome. On the occasion

of the funeral neither Tiberius nor Livia appeared in public, and Antonia also remained within doors, accommodating her conduct to that of Livia. Claudius and Drusus alone took in it a public part. It was characteristic of the obscurity in which Claudius was kept that when, after the conclusion of the trial of Piso on the accusation of having poisoned Germanicus, Cotta Messalinus proposed a vote in the senate of public thanks to be rendered to 'Tiberius, Livia, Antonia, Agrippina, and Drusus, for having avenged the death of Germanicus,' he forgot to include the name of the brother of the deceased, and it was not till L. Asprenas started up and inquired 'whether he was aware that he had omitted him,' that the name of Claudius was inserted in the motion.

In A.D. 7, when Claudius was in his seventeenth year, Augustus had betrothed him to Aemilia Lepida, the ten-year-old daughter of L. Paullus and Julia, the sister of Agrippina, and the emperor's own grandchild. This engagement never resulted in marriage; for in A.D. 8, Julia, the mother of Aemilia, was banished on the same grounds as her mother had been some years previously, and the engagement was broken off. About seven or eight years after, Aemilia was married to Appius Junius Silanus.

When released from the engagement to Aemilia, Claudius was betrothed to Livia Medullina Camilla, of the illustrious family of the Camilli, which numbered among its ancestors the man who had delivered Rome from the Gauls. Her father had been consul in A.D. 8, and after the early death of his only son, the daughter was sole heiress to the estates and honours of the family—grand enough to make an union desirable between the son of Drusus and the representative of so splendid a house. But on the wedding-day a sudden illness carried off the bride. In her place Claudius took Plautia Urgulanilla. Her father, M. Plautius Silvanus, had been consul, A.D. 2, and then governor of Asia, and next of Illyria. Her mother, Lartia, was the daughter of Urgulania, the confidant of Livia; and this connection Claudius no doubt hoped would be of use to him in furthering his ambition. But the laxity of the conduct of Plautia attracted general notice and condemnation; moreover, strong suspicions attached to her of being implicated in a murder. She bore him a son, Drusus, and a daughter. Claudius had such strong reasons for believing the youngest child to be in reality the offspring of an adulterous intercourse with a freedman, that he divorced his wife, and ordered the child to be exposed. His son, Drusus was betrothed in A.D. 20, at an early age, to the daughter of Sejanus; but death interfered with this arrangement. The boy, a few years later, was choked at Pompeii, when tossing pears into the air and catching them in his mouth.

On the death of Sejanus, we again find Claudius as the head of a deputation of the knights to the consuls, to felicitate them on the fall of the vizier.



After his divorce from Plautia he had entered into marriage again, this time with Aelia Paetina, the daughter of a man of consular dignity, Quintus Aelius Tubero, consul B.C. 11. But this marriage did not last long; for after Aelia had given her husband a daughter, called after her grandmother, Antonia, in A.D. 26, Claudius divorced her, owing to some 'trifling misunderstanding.'

With the death of Tiberius, and the succession of his nephew, Caius, to the throne, the prospects of Claudius appeared momentarily brighter. The new Caesar, out of deference to the general sentiment, elevated his uncle to the consulship, and suffered him to appear at the public games in the place which befitted him, and occasionally to act as the representative of himself when absent. It was said that on the first occasion of the appearance of Claudius in the forum with the insignia of office, an eagle fluttered down and perched on his right shoulder; and when he appeared at the spectacles as the representative of his nephew, the people broke out into shouts of 'Hail to the brother of Germanicus!'

A.U.C. 790.  
A.D. 37.  
Act. 46.

But Claudius was made sensible of the capricious nature of Caius during his tenure of office. The young tyrant was offended because his colleague in the consulship had not at once restored the statues of Nero and Drusus. The clouded mind of Caligula took umbrage because his uncle lacked courtly sycophancy, or because he was a ludicrous object with his lurching gait and vacant eyes, and he subjected him to the grossest indignities. The emperor's boon companions were encouraged to make sport of his reputed imbecility. If he appeared, as was often the case, too late at table, then he was obliged to make the circuit of the room, looking for a place, and take what he could get, for no one attempted to make room for him. 'When he indulged himself with sleep after eating, which was his common practice, then the company pelted him with olive-stones and dates. Moreover, the buffoons who were in attendance, would wake him, as a jest, with a cane or a whip. Sometimes they put slippers on his hands, as he lay snoring, that he might, upon awaking, rub his face with them.'

Seneca, or whoever wrote the *Ludus de morte Claudii*, certainly a contemporary, attests that he received blows from a whip and a stick, and had his ears boxed by his nephew, and adds that Caius only spared his life that he might have the pleasure of making mock of him.

About A.D. 38, perhaps the year before that of his consulate, when the prospect before him was smiling, Claudius had entered on his third marriage, and that with Valeria Messalina. She was the daughter of M. Valerius Messalla Barbatus and Domitia Lepida. M. Valerius Messalla was the son of Appius Clodius Pulcher, but he had been adopted by M. Valerius Messalla, consul in B.C. 53. Messalla Barbatus had married Marcella, daughter of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, and Marcellus. Her father, as well as her mother, were the first cousins

of Claudius. She herself inherited a double stream of the sacred Julian blood, the stream came to her through both her father and her mother—a fact she did not forget. She was very young, only sixteen, when she married the feeble, half-paralysed Claudius, and he was thrice her age.

The marriages of Claudius had hitherto not been happy; this one was to prove the most unhappy of all. Of a marriage of affection there could be no question, at least on her side; not only because her husband was nigh on fifty, but also because of his bodily and mental infirmities, and of his uncouth, and even repulsive habits.

Domitia Lepida, the mother of Messalina, was the youngest sister of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the husband of Agrippina, and father of the youthful Nero. Her elder sister, who bore the same name, was married to Crispus Passienus, who at the instigation of Agrippina, had divorced her. Consequently, both sisters were at deadly enmity with Agrippina.

In A.D. 39, when Caius had discovered a conspiracy whilst he was with the army of the Rhine, and had put to death M. Aemilius Lepidus, and Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus, and had banished his sisters to the Ponza Isles,—the senate sent a deputation with Claudius at its head, to congratulate the emperor on his escape from the conspirators. Caius was offended. He said: ‘Am I a boy, requiring supervision, that they send my uncle to me?’ and ordered Claudius to be jostled into the Rhine. He was picked out, and dismissed. Caius ordered that no honours or dignities were to be given to any member of the imperial family without his consent. Although a promise had been made to Claudius that he should hold the consulate for a second time, for A.D. 40, this promise Claudius saw was not likely to be fulfilled, and when, on the 1st January A.D. 40, Caius entered on his third consulate, it was without a colleague. On his return to Rome, the crazy emperor had himself deified as Jupiter Latiaris, and appointed his uncle, as well as his own wife, Caesonia, and the principal members of



the noble families of Rome to be his priests ; for receiving this honour, each had to pay the emperor eight millions of sesterces. Claudius was a poor man, and as he was unable to make up this sum for a barren honour, all the estates he possessed were confiscated and sold by auction.

The long protracted series of humiliations Claudius had undergone had blunted his self-respect. He accepted the impertinences of the courtiers, the insults of his nephew, without resentment, as part of the conduct towards himself to which he had been accustomed, though in a less acute form, from earliest boyhood ; and when, shortly after, the power came into his hands, he did not punish one of those who had treated him with contumely. He is shown to us as a man who never forgot a kindness and never remembered an injury.

For himself he was without great ambition. His interests lay not in making the history of his own times, but in unravelling that of the past. Antonia was right when she spoke of him as an incomplete production of Nature ; his mind was ill balanced, he had abilities of no ordinary kind in some directions, he was impotent as a child in others. He was kindly, good-hearted, well-intentioned, but without the faculty of sympathising with, of understanding suffering. He could look on with callous indifference at a butchery of gladiators, and yet willingly he would not have caused any blood to flow.

Tiberius had undergone somewhat the same treatment as Claudius ; he had been set aside, thrust into the background, flouted, though never subjected to the last indignities to which Claudius was exposed by his nephew. On both it had the same effect—it made both timorous and shy ; but it had also a different effect—it made Tiberius proud in his self-reserve, whereas it destroyed in Claudius all his native dignity. Tiberius, feeling himself misunderstood, and disliking the society of the nobility, withdrew into himself, and shut himself out from association with mankind which he despised ; Claudius despised no one but himself, and instead of withdrawing from society courted it,—not indeed that of the nobility, but of the common citizens, the freedmen and the buffoons, with whom he could joke, and drink and be merry, and who exacted of him no imperial stateliness, no princely dignity. To such a degree had he lost his self-respect in this association that he gave free vent to little coarsenesses at meals, only tolerable among mule-drivers and porters, and when he was emperor, finding these habits gave offence, and that he could not break himself of them, he issued an edict to permit such grossnesses in cultured society,—to the great amusement of the Roman people.

Repeatedly, in the senate, Claudius, when emperor, asserted that he had feigned stupidity, under Tiberius and Caius, ‘as only by so doing had he any prospect of attaining to the high offices he had reached,’ and though the senate made semblance of believing him, they laughed in

their sleeves, and circulated a pamphlet relative to this assertion headed 'The Resurrection of Fools.'

But the mind of Claudius was not that of a fool, it was a noble mind unhinged, and he had a noble nature untrained. Through the clouds that obscured his thoughts flashed original and masterly ideas, and although weak and yielding to impulses, and so committing great wrongs, he was able to achieve great acts of right, and notably to alleviate many hardships and distresses under which the people suffered.

Twenty-four years of childhood and youth had been spent under Augustus, twenty-two more in retirement and obscurity under Tiberius, four in contumely and danger under Caius, and now suddenly he was thrust into the first place in the world.

Of portraits of Claudius in his younger days we have none that we can with any confidence identify.<sup>1</sup>

That his bust was made and set up is not improbable, for at all events in the colonies and provinces he received from the first a recognition denied him in Rome. Thus there was a group of statuary at Pavia, over one of the gates, in which he was represented, and inscriptions in his honour have been found at Pola, Troas, Tibur, Pompeii, Mantua, Nepete, and Chios, set up long before he was emperor. But the busts were not numerous.

### III.—THE FIRST YEARS.

CLAUDIUS had escaped the sword of the guard to be raised to the throne. He found himself emperor before he had ceased to tremble at his escape from death.

A.U.C. 794.  
A.D. 41.  
Aet. 50.

He had been proclaimed by the military—with him indeed was initiated the series of military proclamations—and he had been recognised, though with reluctance, by the senate. He owed his elevation to no quality that could command the enthusiasm of the soldiery or the respect of the senators. He had neither served with the colours, nor had he appeared on the political stage. He owed his elevation solely to the fact of his having some drops of Julian blood in his veins. But there were others with quite as much, if not more, of this sacred *ichor*: notably his own wife Messalina, who had it in double portion. There was Quintilius Varus, who also reckoned Octavia as his great-grandmother; there were three Junii Silani, men of wealth and high position, whose mother was Aemilia Lepida, and who therefore also claimed descent from Octavia, and there were the two sisters of the late emperor, his own nieces, both ambitious women, one the mother of a son who, as the grandchild of Germanicus, was invested with ideal sacredness in the eyes of the people.

<sup>1</sup> Except one in the Capitoline Museum. (Sala delle Colombe, No. 58.)



The principle of heredity was not formulated ; but the praetorian guards considered themselves as bound by their oath to the Caesarian house ; and descent from the Julian race long after afforded a claim to the throne, and exposed all whose descent was certain to observation, suspicion and danger.

The only thread attaching Claudius to the divine race was through Octavia, his grandmother on his mother's side. But if on one side he could boast of this attachment to the sacred tree, on the other, it could not be forgotten that his mother was the daughter of Mark Antony, the great opponent of Octavius. The first solicitude therefore of the new emperor was to assume the name of Caesar, whereby to engraft himself, according to the ideas of adoption then prevalent, into the Caesarian family, and to become its legitimate representative. This step was followed by an exhibition of filial piety towards the imperial race. He declared that the oath 'By Augustus !' would thenceforth be his most solemn asseveration, and he appointed himself priest of the deified Augustus ; he struck coins that bore the head of Octavius, surrounded by rays, or amidst seven stars, or represented his statue as borne on a chariot drawn by four elephants.

There were two famous paintings by Apelles in Rome, one representing Alexander with the goddess of Victory and the Dioscuri, the other, Alexander, on a chariot drawing the god of war after him with bound hands. Claudius had the faces of Alexander altered into the features of Augustus. Livia received the highest honours. Tiberius had objected to her apotheosis, Claudius canonised her, and her head was impressed on medals ; statues were erected to her in temples in the provinces, and the emperor himself dedicated her idealised statue in the Augusteum, and made the worship of Livia one of the functions of the vestals. He ordered, moreover, that on solemn occasions her image should be taken round the circus on a car drawn by two elephants. Races were appointed in her honour, and the oath 'By Livia !' made one lawful and sacred for women.

Claudius, moreover, honoured in various ways the memory of his own parents, of his brother Germanicus, and his sister-in-law Agrippina. So also did he treat with respect the memory of the two last emperors, and honoured them as far as public opinion suffered him to do so. A marble triumphal arch was erected near the theatre of Pompeius in honour of Tiberius, and his birthday, the 16th December, and the day of his victory over the Illyrians, the 3d August, were appointed to be kept as festivals.

In the cabinet of gems at Vienna is a magnificent sardonyx that represents four busts, rising out of horns of plenty, two male in the forefront, behind these two female heads. That on the left in the forefront is certainly Claudius, and almost as certainly opposite him is Tiberius with the deified Livia, as Roma, with laurel-wreathed helm,

precisely as she is represented on another famous cameo, the Apotheosis of Augustus. Along with Claudius is Messalina.<sup>1</sup>

Even towards the memory of Caligula all possible forbearance was shown. The senate wished to appoint the day of his murder as a festival of thanksgiving for delivery from a monster. This Claudius refused to permit. He had his statues removed by night, and his name struck out of the official formularies of prayer and oath-taking. A few years later, we find coins struck with the head of Claudius on one side and that of his predecessor on the other.

The sisters of Caligula, Agrippina and Julia, were recalled from banishment, and their property that had been confiscated was restored to them.

Claudius, moreover, in contradistinction to the policy of his predecessor, treated with honour the last representatives of the Julian race. Lucius Junius Silanus was a son of the great-granddaughter of Augustus, Aemilia Lepida; he betrothed him to his own daughter Octavia, then in her tenderest infancy.

He recalled C. Appius Silanus, the father of his intended son-in-law, from Spain, where he was governor, and married him to his own mother-in-law, Domitia Lepida. By this means, Appius Silanus obtained as his second wife a woman who was descended from the imperial family, as had been his first, the mother of his sons.

In like manner did he treat the Licinii, another very illustrious family, not indeed inheriting the Julian blood, but descended on one hand from Scribonia, the mother of the only daughter of Octavius, the founder of the monarchy, and on the other from the triumvirs, Pompeius and Crassus. However insignificant the head of this family might be, the consular, M. Licinius Crassus Frugi, yet, as his son bore the name of Cn. Pompeius Magnus, which came to him through his grandmother Pompeia, on his mother's side, the daughter of Sextus Pompeius, this had excited the jealousy and suspicion of Caligula, who had forbidden his bearing the name. Claudius not only restored to him the name, but married him to his daughter Antonia.

Claudius had none of the craving for Oriental pomp and circumstance of royalty that had fevered the brain of his nephew. He loved simplicity, and after he was prince lived very much as he had lived before. He had refused to assume the title of Imperator as a praenomen, and refused that divine adoration which had become customary

<sup>1</sup> Bernoulli tries to make out that the heads opposite Claudius and Messalina are Germanicus and Agrippina *major*. But the resemblance to Tiberius, though idealised, is hardly to be gainsaid. It is true the forehead has not the usual height, but there was a reason for it being shortened, so as to allow for the crista of the helmet of Livia to appear above it. The mouth and chin are certainly those of Tiberius. Agrippina could not be represented as Roma, and the profile is not in the least like hers. Livia is represented as Roma elsewhere, and the profile is that of the deified Livia. It is true that Tiberius and Livia are represented as young, but that is because they have passed into the region of the gods.

under his predecessor. When he appeared in public, he would not suffer himself to be approached with servile bows, and to be addressed in terms of extravagant respect. When he attended the opening of the new theatre of Pompeius that had been burnt down, but which he restored, he wore the imperial mantle only at the outset, then cast it aside for the senatorial toga. He allowed no gladiatorial shows to be given 'for his wellbeing,' and when the senate voted to him statues, he accepted three only, and declined the rest, on the grounds that it was a bit of idle extravagance, and put people to inconvenience; as it was, he said, the town was overcrowded with statues. On his birthday he would allow merely the ordinary races celebrated on that day in commemoration of the dedication of the temple of Mars Ultor; when he attended festivities at Naples towards the end of the year, he and his attendants appeared in Greek dress, and lived as private individuals. He even contested for the prize in music, and when he had to dispose of the prizes at the gymnastic games, he wore the senatorial and not the imperial habit.

The betrothal and marriage of his daughters were conducted without display, and neither did the senate adjourn its sittings, nor did Claudius neglect his magisterial duties on account of them. No public festival was made on the birth of a son to Antonia; and his sons-in-law remained in their offices and positions as before. The only difference made was that they were taken into the number of the Twenty men, and into the college of the Arval brothers. Even the permission to enter on offices of state five years before the legal period was not granted to them at first.

In the private circle of the prince, Valeria Messalina was the person of chief consequence, not only because of her descent on both sides from the Julian family, but also because her husband was passionately attached to her. She ruled him completely, and he suffered her to follow her own caprices, not only in private, but also to deal with matters of state in a most arbitrary manner. She was not in the least enamoured of her doting husband. As a young girl of seventeen she was suddenly raised to a dizzy height, and was entirely without principle of any kind to control her conduct. She found herself flattered and admired by the dissolute nobles and ladies of Roman society, found herself able to make her husband do anything she chose to ask him, and was aware that he himself held her in awe, and showed her deference because she stood nearer to the sacred line than himself.

Messalina had given to Claudius a daughter, Octavia, whilst Caius was on the throne; twenty days after the accession of her husband she bore him a son, who received the name Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, but who is known in history as Britannicus. This event occasioned great rejoicings in the palace. It seemed to ensure the succession to the Claudian-Julian house; otherwise the nearest male heir was the

son of Agrippina the Younger by Domitius Ahenobarbus. But though rejoicing at the prospect of being able to pass on the succession to a son who would combine the rights derived from his mother as well as from his father, Claudius was full of apprehension for his own security. The terrors of that January night were not so easily shaken off. For thirty days after it, he remained hidden in the palace, surrounded by a cordon of guards. His son was born on the 17th February, and it was not till ten days after this that he was able sufficiently to master his apprehensions and appear in the senate, and then to visit the praetorians in their camp, carrying the babe in his arms, and as a proud father, to exhibit him to the military. The delight of the emperor in his son was so great, and exhibited with such frankness, that it pleased the people. In the theatre he danced his babe before their eyes, or sat him on his lap, and when the populace cheered he held the little creature out, crowing with delight to their enthusiastic plaudits.

But no proofs of favour shown him by the people could reassure Claudius against the haunting dread of assassination. At table a military guard occupied the hall, and soldiers waited on him with the dishes. Every one who sought an audience had to submit to a rigorous search; and even their stylus-holders were removed, as it was in these that the daggers had been concealed wherewith the great Caesar had been murdered. It was not till late on in his reign that Claudius exempted women and children from this search before they were admitted to his presence. Not only so, but when the prince paid a visit to the sick, which he often did, in his kindly interest in his friends, their rooms, beds, pillows were all submitted to examination before the emperor would enter.

On the birth of the young prince the senate decreed the title of Augustus and Augusta to the child and to Messalina, but Claudius declined it for both; in the provinces, however, the highest honours were accorded to the empress and her children. Messalina was entitled Augusta, and was represented with divine emblems as Ceres, upon medals, with the horn of plenty in her left hand, and her children on her right; and Britannicus was figured either alone or between his sisters as a special gift of the gods.

Even before the birth of his son to gladden his heart, Claudius had shown to the people that his intention was to rule with mildness, and not to avenge injuries. After the pattern of the Athenians, he passed an act of perpetual oblivion and pardon for every thing done during the days of commotion when Caius was murdered, exempting from clemency only Chaerea and Lupus, 'both as an example, and also because he understood that they had planned his own assassination also.' Saturninus, unwilling to survive his comrade, threw himself on his sword. Claudius extended his favour not only to those who had declared themselves against his election, but even to those who had set



themselves up as rival candidates, and advanced them to offices and honours.

The attention of the emperor was called immediately on his accession to the urgent necessities of the city, through failure of supply of corn. The officers in charge of the granaries announced to him that they had supplies for seven or eight days only. The senseless conduct of Caius in laying his hands on all merchant vessels wherewith to construct his useless bridge had checked the conveyance of wheat to the city. No one had ventured to remonstrate with the madman, and to point out to him the famine that impended. It must be remembered that every citizen drew from the granaries sufficient corn for his household at a reduced price, and that about two hundred thousand of the poorer inhabitants received free daily distribution of wheat. But now the source whence all the thousands of the population were fed was drying up; and although the cause of this famine was due to the folly of the last ruler, the fact of its existence was certain to imperil the position of the new one.

With energy and promptitude Claudius met the danger before it became serious. He had the bridge broken up and the boats at once commissioned to bring corn from Egypt, and whatever material had been accumulated which would not serve for this purpose was devoted to the improvement and enlargement of the harbour constructed by Vipsanius Agrippa. At the same time, special privileges were granted to private ventures to relieve the pressing necessity and prevent its recurrence. Whoever built a ship that would contain a stipulated amount of corn, and should employ it for six years in the grain traffic, was to be rewarded with the Roman citizenship; if the venturers were Latins, they were to be relieved from certain charges; if citizens, and merchants on a large scale, they were exempted from all charges.

The treasury, moreover, undertook to indemnify the corn merchants for losses by shipwreck, and guaranteed vessels run aground against being pillaged by wreckers. By this promptitude the immediate danger was averted; and although some time elapsed before the deficiency already caused by the folly of Caligula could be made up, yet the senate recognised, by the issue of a medal bearing the figure of Ceres Augusta, and the legend *Ob cives servatos*, that the relief of the city from famine was due to the wise measures adopted by the new ruler.

Simultaneously with this energetic action for the sustenance of the citizens went relief from the more serious exactions laid on them by his predecessor. But in this Claudius did not act with inconsiderate precipitation. He removed the burdens one by one, and the coinage which had been debased by Caius was now restored to its proper value.

He then took into consideration the cases of such as had been exiled, and here again he acted with discretion. Each case was considered separately, and if an injustice had been committed, the banished

person was recalled and his confiscated goods restored to him. So also with respect to those languishing in the prisons. Only real criminals were left in gaol; and all those estates and fortunes that had been appropriated by Caius or Tiberius were returned to the expropriated, if alive, if not, to their children. The papers of Caligula, among which were two books, *The Dagger* and *The Sword*, containing lists of those citizens whom he proposed to destroy, also all those letters and registers relating to the conspiracy of Sejanus, which Caius, with so much parade, had pretended to burn in the senate-house—these Claudius now produced, allowed the senators to look at and recognise their own signatures, and peruse their own incriminating correspondence, and then he destroyed them before their eyes.

Caius had knocked a hole through the end of the sanctuary of the temple of the Dioscuri in the forum, and had converted it into a sort of porter's lodge to his palace on the Palatine above. Claudius restored the temple, and gave back to it several works of art that had been carried off from it by Caius.

Having released the prisoners and restored the exiles suffering for political offences, Claudius now abolished the law of treason, which had hung like a sword over the heads of the Roman nobility and knights for twenty-five years. Moreover, he solemnly promised that thenceforth no freeman should be placed on the rack to extort from him a confession. It had become customary, it had been made compulsory, that every testator should make the emperor one of his legatees; but Claudius forbade this proceeding, and when he found that bequests fell to him from citizens he restored them to the rightful heirs.

Claudius behaved with respect towards the senate and the officers of state. He referred all the more important measures that he contemplated to the senate, and would not enter the assembly with his guards in attendance without their permission. He seated himself between the consuls, and only rarely on the curule chair which had been occupied by the Caesars since A.D. 19. When the consuls entered the senate house he stood up and advanced to meet them; and when the governors of provinces thanked him for their promotion, or for continuing them in their offices, 'It is not for you to thank me,' he answered, with as much truth as courtesy, 'but for me to thank you for administering your office righteously and relieving me of care.'

The populace of Rome probably regarded Claudius with less favour than did the superior classes; for it had been mainly on the latter that the hand of Caius had lain heavy, whereas he had kept the former amused with spectacles and sports. These not only encouraged idleness but cost the treasury vast sums, and Claudius set to work to curtail their number and reduce their splendour. Every festival was celebrated by races and gladiatorial shows, and if any technicality in the ritual on such occasions was transgressed the whole had to be gone through

again, so that sometimes games designed to be performed on one day were protracted over two. Claudius put a stop to this by insisting that they should not be repeated on any excuse, and he moreover reduced the number of festivals in the Roman calendar. As each holy day was a day on which neither the senate nor the courts of justice could sit, and shops were closed and all mercantile business was brought to a standstill, and as the number of these festivals amounted to two-thirds of the days in the year, the inconvenience was considerable. Augustus had abolished thirty festivals, but under Tiberius fresh holy days had been appointed, and Caius had further increased the number. It was true that to the general populace the inconvenience was not such as would exist in a modern city, as they received their largesses of corn daily, and were therefore not concerned to earn their livelihood; but the vast number of holy days interfered gravely with the work in the courts of justice, and it was precisely this work that had paramountly interested Claudius. He attended the pleadings in the forum, in the courts of the various officers, 'daily and nightly' with real zest; regardless of many a festival, he occupied his seat to dispense justice to the citizens when every other court was closed; even in the burning heats of July and August he took his place in the senate, sometimes with assessors, sometimes without. Old and infirm though he was, he was indefatigable in conducting judicial investigations; and it is said that when he rose to retire for a brief meal, and a suitor plucked him by the robe or held his feet, he would patiently return to his chair and postpone his hour of refreshment. This devotion to business amused the idle Romans and provoked their contempt, which found its vent in many an anecdote retailed by his biographers, but which we may not trust too confidently. On one occasion a Greek who was in a suit, not being satisfied with the justice administered by Claudius, shouted out to him, 'You are an old fool!'

A Roman knight was so offended at Claudius suffering women of abandoned character to be produced in evidence against him that he threw some books he had in his hands and his steel style in the face of the imperial judge, with such violence as to cause blood to flow from his cheek.

A suitor making excuses for the non-appearance of a witness on his side, gave as one of them that the man was dead. 'That excuse is sufficient,' said Claudius drily.

Claudius was laughed at if he good-naturedly gave up his mid-day meal to listen to a case, and laughed at if he yielded to hunger. One day, whilst seated in the forum, the smell of roast came to his nostrils from the courts of the Salii. He jumped out of his seat and tottered away to the place whence the savoury fumes issued, to beg a mouthful. He was laughed at for sitting so long in court, laughed at if he sometimes fell asleep whilst listening to the harangues of the advo-

cates; and it was forgotten that Claudius slept badly at night, never retiring to his bed till after midnight, and rising early.

‘However this passion for judicial functions might be open to caricature, and however his intellectual infirmities might betray themselves in occasional haste, frivolity, or indecision, the conduct of Claudius seems to have been actuated by a sincerely beneficent intention, and shows beyond dispute the principles of moderation and equity which distinguished him. A man can hardly be naturally a tyrant who takes pleasure in meting out justice and deciding questions of right. It was with real satisfaction, therefore, we may believe, that Claudius suppressed the laws of high treason, and forbade the practice of delation.’<sup>1</sup>

According to Suetonius, in his judgments ‘he was most unequal, sometimes prudent and discerning, sometimes hasty and inconsiderate, sometimes even absurd and silly.’ No historians have recorded instances of his conduct in the first category, but the legal codes show good evidence of both his prudence and discernment. For instance, the *Lex Claudia* introduced and carried by him removed women from being under guardianship to agnates, and he promulgated the law that the *peculium* of a son still standing under the *patria potestas* was not to be touched, in the event of the father’s property being distrained upon for debt to the treasury. One of his enactments shows that he had milder and more humane views with respect to the slaves than had any of his predecessors. He ordained that those slaves who were sick, and had been exposed by their masters in the temple of Æsculapius on the Tiberine isle, should, if they recovered, obtain their freedom; and he startled Roman indifference to the sufferings of the servile population by forbidding masters to rid themselves of old and infirm servants by putting them to death: such masters as thus acted he declared to be guilty of murder.

One of the decrees issued by Claudius is of particular interest to us, as it relates to the exhibition of portrait statuary. In the year A.D. 45, having found that the old *jus imaginum* had fallen into disregard, and that any man of means who chose set up his statue or bust, just as nowadays any rich man assumes a coat-of-arms without troubling the Heralds’ College for a grant, Claudius issued a rescript forbidding any man from erecting his portrait statue or bust in any public place or building without licence from the senate.

Though Claudius suffered in popularity among the rabble by his reduction of the number of shows and by his avoidance of display, so that they decked with flowers the sepulchre of Chaerea, not as honouring him for having rid them of Caligula, but as a hint that they would gladly be rid of Claudius, yet among the more sober his kindness, his simplicity, his attention to business, and his homely virtues engaged their affection and respect. Moreover, the old palsied emperor under-

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, vi. p. 125.



took public works that were of real utility. The aqueduct of the Aqua Virgo had been broken through by Caius for the sake of making a theatre. Claudius repaired it. But his most important work was the construction of a harbour at Ostia. At the outset of his imperial career he had met the difficulty of a threatened famine in Rome. But difficulties were continually arising owing to there being no harbour on the coasts of Latium at all suitable to the demands of a great city. Ostia, on the left side of the mouth of the Tiber, had been filled with sand in the time of Caesar, and many projects had been made for the construction of a new harbour, but nothing had been done, and vessels were obliged to anchor outside the mole, and to partly unlade into lighters at sea before they could proceed up the Tiber to the wharfs below Rome. Claudius proposed the excavation of an artificial basin, to be in connection with the river by a canal. The engineers protested that the scheme was impracticable. Claudius remained obstinate in his conviction that the thing not only could be done, but was the only practicable solution of the difficulty. He persisted in his scheme, and it proved successful. The cost was enormous, but the necessity was of the highest.

Another of his plans was the draining of Lake Fucinus. In this he was less successful, owing either to incorrect levelling by the engineer employed or to the fraud of the freedman Narcissus, to whom the charge had been committed. He brought to the city the Aqua Claudia in the splendid aqueduct the arches of which form so picturesque an object on the Campagna; and also the limpid waters of the Anio Nova in another of hardly inferior magnificence.

When the reins of government fell to the hands of Claudius, it was at a moment when it needed a shrewd head and a cool judgment to bring the reeling chariot of the State into its proper course. The assassination of Caius revived the memory of the assassination of Julius Caesar, and had excited wild hopes of a recurrence to the old condition of affairs before the threads of government were gathered into one hand. 'Abroad,' says Mr. Furneaux, 'Caius had unsettled everything and settled nothing, had pillaged Gaul, stirred up the long slumbering hostility of the German tribes, driven Palestine into open rebellion, flouted the deputations sent to plead for the persecuted Jews of Alexandria, had created or deposed vassal princes at the humour of his caprice, and, by the murder or detention of their legitimate rulers, had left Mauritania a prey to war, Commagene to anarchy, and had abandoned the great kingdom of Armenia to the control of Parthia.'<sup>1</sup>

Some justice must be done to Claudius, this dotard as he is represented, when we find that the difficulties of the empire were met so readily and prudently. Whether it was by him or by his advisers, certain it is that measures the most just and well-timed were taken

<sup>1</sup> Furneaux, *Tacitus*, vol. ii. p. 24.

that averted the danger threatened. If Claudius did not originate them, he had at least the wisdom to give them force and see to their being executed.

A good many statues and busts of Claudius remain, by which we are able to form a tolerable estimate of his appearance. The old and venerable head was, indeed, set on an ill-proportioned body, but the sculptors who rendered his features with fidelity thought themselves excused from following nature too severely in the representation of his full paunch and feeble legs. Yet in the toga-clad statue in the Vatican (Fig. 90) the dragging foot is indicated as well as the general physical and intellectual feebleness.

'If his figure,' says Dean Merivale, 'as we are told, was tall, and when sitting appeared not ungraceful, his face, at least in repose, was eminently handsome. But it is impossible not to remark in it an expression of pain and anxiety which forcibly arrests our sympathy. It is the face of an honest and well-meaning man, who feels himself unequal to the task imposed upon him. There is a look of perplexity in which he may have pored over the mysteries of Etruscan lore, carried to the throne of the world, and engaged in the deepest problems of finance and citizenship. There is the expression of fatigue both of mind and body, which speaks of midnight watches over books, varied with midnight carouses at the imperial table and the fierce caresses of rival mistresses. There is the glance of fear, not of open enemies, but of pretended friends; the reminiscence of wanton blows and the anticipation of the deadly potion. Above all, there is the anxious glance of dependence, which seems to cast about for a model to imitate, for ministers to shape a policy, and for satellites to execute it.'<sup>1</sup>

To this admirable appreciation of the portraits of Claudius I will add a few more, but none, to my mind, quite so good.

M. Mayor, on the Chiaramonti head (No. 18), observes: 'The jaw is small; the glandular region large, almost puffed. Claudius was scrofulous. The face still young, with precocious and deep wrinkles on the brow; the frontal bone projecting in the region between the brows and at the upper orbital and upper nasal points. Expression sad and dazed. Mouth tremulous with tears (*Bouche pleurade*); an hereditary *ricтус* of the upper lip. Ears projecting. Asymmetry; the right ear further out, and the largest. So also with the left eye. The right eye highest; the left cheek largest and pendulous. Brow and chin regular. On the statue in the Chiaramonti Gallery (No. 117) he remarks: 'The aspect is one of suffering and sadness, with shadows of hesitation, fear, and embarrassment. It is the Claudius of history—the man with no other will than that of his immediate surroundings. Face drawn to the left. The right ear more detached than the left.' On the colossal bust in the Vatican (No. 551) he says: 'A marked irregularity. The left eye

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, vi. pp. 11, 12

longer—higher than the right.' (This is contrary to the bust in the Chiaramonti, where the left eye is lower.) 'The portion between the brows is prominent. Ears stick out; much disengaged. The glandular region swollen.' This inflation of the glands, indicative of scrofula, is found in nearly all the portraits, busts, and statues of Claudius. M. Mayor notices the *air pleurad* in nearly every representation of the unhappy man placed in a position for which he was eminently unsuited by nature.

Viktor Rydberg says: 'It is impossible to reproach the Roman art of portraiture with flattery. It gave what the Romans insisted on—rigid fidelity to nature. It made no exception in favour of the Caesars and their house, not even for the women. Proofs of this almost repulsive fidelity to nature are to be found. An empress, arrived at a more than mature age, is to be represented as Venus. It is possible that she would be glad to decline the honour. She belongs to that period in life when old ladies drape their withered beauties; but she has duties as Caesar's spouse, and must resign herself to her fate. The goddess of love was the ancestress of the Julian race; and so her attributes, but not her beauty, descend to the empress, much as do the attributes of St. Peter, though not always his virtues and faith, to the reigning Pope. The artist has to immortalise her undraped charms, and he does it with almost brutal frankness, so that the little cupid, with finger to his mouth, at her feet, seems to sigh, "O for a curtain." . . . And as to Claudius: in the Vatican statue of this emperor as Jupiter, the sculptor has, so to speak, wrought into the marble the Greek word used by Augustus to characterise Claudius—his *meteorion*. When we hear that word we represent to ourselves a floating in boundless space, amid vapours; an irresolute life, spent in vague dreams, directed, or rather undirected, by a feeble will, crossed by flashes of lofty purpose. His was Hamlet's life; one reads it with surprising clearness in every line of the statue. His is a well-formed head, against which, from the point of beauty, one can take no exception, save perhaps that the oval of the face is somewhat too compressed. The broad forehead is overcast with clouds of melancholy. The eyes disclose, with their unsteady, sad, and kindly look, a plodding and suffering spirit, that is conscious of its noble birth, but is unable to maintain its freedom. The mouth is well modelled, and indicates a refinement of feeling one would not have expected here, but which, on an impartial investigation of Claudius's nature, comes to light. The bearing is noble, but overstrained; the formation of the body irreproachable, save for the narrow shoulders. The whole makes a painful yet winning impression. We seem to see unhappiness that has a right to plead for sympathy, and weakness coupled with too much good for it to awaken only contempt. The rotunda of the Vatican has also an excellent bust of the same emperor, and the Lateran has in its keeping another, an

enthroned statue, and the latter also is a good work of art. They all speak well of their original, and all seem to show that their creators loved their work. That love of their task which one discovers—it is not possible to say how—has not always worked well with eye and taste on the Roman emperors. One finds it in the statues of Claudius in the beautiful Vatican Nerva, in certain of the best portraits of Trajan, and of Antoninus Pius—but otherwise, rarely. . . . One reads in the face of Claudius the evidence of grief over defeat in the struggle between the inner law and the law of the flesh. Study and plodding attention to duties were the only safeguards against the temptations of his senses; and when he was thus absorbed in the world of thought and dreams, objects passed before his eye without his seeing them, voices sounded in his ears without his hearing them, events happened convulsing all around without interesting him. His soul was a camera obscura, that caught a slender ray of light and left all else in darkness; his was a noble soul in chains. Unhappily, such weakness is often more rigorously judged than strength of will that has no chains at all—not even those of conscience—to shake off.’

Ampère has been unusually happy in his account of Claudius. Usually prepossessed with his anti-Napoleonic antagonism, he looks out for some trace of the First or Third Napoleon in the earlier Roman emperors, and girds through them at his enemies. But in Claudius he could see nothing Napoleonic, and could therefore consider him without prejudice. He says: ‘Claudius had received a thick envelope from nature, and in all his movements there was a *gaucherie* and heaviness which threw up into greater prominence the amiable and brilliant qualities of his brother Germanicus. At an early age he was a butt to the sarcasms of his grandmother Livia and his mother Antonia; he was, so to speak, the family Cinderella. Like the brothers of sultans who are destined not to reign, he spent his youth indolently in the palace, surrounded by women and freedmen, in the midst of those easy luxuries to which he was always inclined. But it is worth observing that he alone of the Caesarean family deserves the praise of being free from a certain set of vices; treated with contempt, abandoned to ridicule and outrage, he came to despise himself and lose his self-respect. His was an intelligence going to pieces, never without some greatness. In some points, Claudius was grotesque, sometimes gruesome; in some points he merits our admiration, but spiced with equal portions of pity and ridicule. Hence the contradictions presented by this soul smothered by a clumsy and degenerate body; but as Augustus, who knew men well, said of him, “When his mind was not gone wool-gathering, there was perceptible in him a natural nobility.”

‘After this study of the quaint and unhappy Claudius, one can understand the beauty of his portraits, in which the soul, entangled and lost in a gross material, gleams out with sad and sombre light. His



soul seems to be struggling with its wrap, and the fact of this struggle is shown by the profound melancholy of his countenance, such as one can imagine possessed those genii in Oriental tales, that have been sealed up in jars.'

#### IV.—THE FREEDMEN.

THE man who had been thrust in childhood and youth from association with those of his birth and position, when suddenly elevated to the throne brought with him into power the associates he had been forced

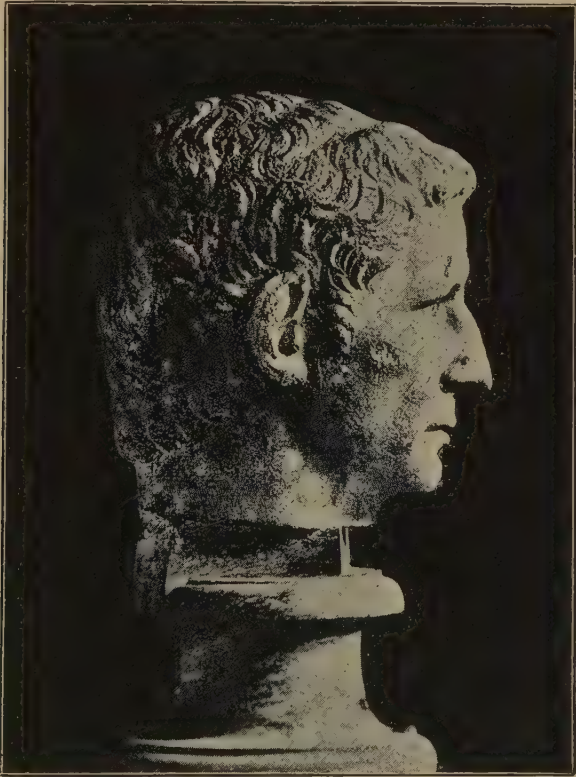


FIG. 92.—CLAUDIUS. Bust in the Brunswick Museum.

to make. The only persons with whom he had joked and drunk, or studied and declaimed, had been Greek emancipated slaves; and, grateful to them for having shown him some deference—been to him comrades in the time of his debasement—Claudius was ready to recompense them when he had the power so to do. The freedmen in the imperial palace formed a class that had already proved its influence. They had done services to their lords that no man of the Roman plebs would have

undertaken, not to speak of members of the equestrian and aristocratic families; and in return for their services those recommendations of suitors for office who had bribed them had been listened to.

The kindly, generous manner of Julius Caesar, and his unique genius, had attached to him men of Roman birth and honourable ancestry, who had willingly lent him their aid. 'The ascendancy he naturally exercised over all that came in contact with him enabled him to secure the spontaneous services of men of birth and consideration hardly inferior to his own. Such were the stewards of his revenues, the managers of his public and private benevolences, Romans in birth and blood, men attached to him by real friendship, who felt that they could ply without disgrace before his acknowledged superiority. But even the inheritor of a throne had no such personal influence as Nature's emperor, the first of the Caesars. Augustus, great as he was in genius, as well as in station, scarcely found such willing subservience among the citizens of his own country. He had recourse to the venal attachment of his freedmen, whose fidelity exacted no requital, and hardly expected an acknowledgment; and of these he held many in intimacy, and cultivated their esteem. He neither required of them degrading services, nor again did he suffer them to gorge themselves with the spoils of his suitors. He enjoyed the solace of their intimacy; and when most anxious for privacy, and the ever-coveted respite from the formalities of patrician life, it was in the suburban villa of one of these humble ministers that he would disburden himself of the cares of his station. Tiberius, whose strict self-discipline, at least till the latter years of his retirement, was even more severe and unremitting, allowed himself no such relaxation; his freedmen were few in numbers, and seem to have enjoyed no portion of his confidence. The perturbed spirit of Caius was agitated by restless furies which never suffered him to seek repose, or court the charms of simplicity for a moment. During the fitful fever of his brief grasp of power, he never threw off the public man and the sovereign; he never sought the shade, or cast upon another the cares and toils of his awful pre-eminence. None possessed more than a momentary influence over him. But the fashion of keeping freedmen always in attendance on the Roman noble had become, from the prevailing indolence of the age, by this time general; and Caius had many such about his court, though he deigned to make little use of them. When, therefore, a prince succeeded to whom ministers and confidants were a necessity, the institution was ready to his hands. The various services—partly official, partly menial—which monarchs in modern times have been allowed by the spirit of feudalism to exact from their noble vassals, were discharged for Claudius by these Grecian adventurers.'<sup>1</sup>

Not Claudius only, but Messalina also, required the assistance of these men of foreign origin, and took them into her confidence. She took no

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, vi. 141, 142.

interest in the affairs of the State; but she was, if we may trust the Roman historians, a woman of extravagant habits and of an inflammable heart. She had never loved her old and somewhat ridiculous husband; young, beautiful, passionate, she formed sudden and vehement attachments, and she required the favour of the freedmen to assist her in her love affairs, and to conceal them from her husband. She had to buy their help and their silence.

Thus the palace was filled with men of this class, ready to meet Messalina's wishes, and to amuse Claudius with buffoonery, to throw dice with him, to engross him in some antiquarian pursuit, and to humour his most fantastic schemes. In return for these services, these Greek adventurers made themselves indispensable. They played on the emperor's fears for his life, to wring out of him complete submission to their direction, and on those of the empress lest they should betray her misconduct, so as to obtain her connivance at their methods of amassing fortunes. Among the freedmen, the first place was taken by Pallas. He had been in the service of Antonia for many years, and had been the most trusty person she could find to commission with the letter to Tiberius that led to the fall of Sejanus. Claudius appointed him to be steward of the finances, with such unlimited powers that his accounts were subjected to no auditor, and he was not required to answer for anything he did with the money that passed through his hands. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that he amassed an enormous fortune, possessed a splendid garden on the Esquiline Hill, and a magnificent villa at Sabinum. Next to him, but superior to him in ability and energy of character, stood Narcissus, the secretary of the emperor, girded with a dagger as token of his office, a man who amassed prodigious wealth, and had a fancy for keeping white dogs. A third was Callistus, put up for auction by his first master as a slave 'good at provoking a laugh;' he attained to great riches and power under Caligula, and was shrewd enough to then cultivate the favour of Claudius, and pretend to him that his interposition alone had saved his life. Claudius, never forgetful of a kindness, and believing that this was as represented, appointed him as the intermediary through whose hands all petitions passed to him. He was a man loving splendour; his banqueting hall was supported on thirty onyx columns. But he was likewise a patron of literature, and to him the physician Scribonius Largus dedicated a medical work.

Then came Polybius, the assistant of Claudius in his studies, the translator of Homer into Latin and of Virgil into Greek; an historian, held by his lord in such esteem that both consuls deemed it well to walk at his side when he appeared in public; a man whose favour and intercession Seneca sought, when in exile, by a flattering letter of consolation. Another was Harpocrates, whom Claudius permitted to be borne in a litter through the city and to give public shows. Another,

again, was Posides, an eunuch, to whom, at the British triumph of Claudius, the same honours were granted as were usually accorded to well-trying soldiers. Lastly, we may mention Felix, known to us by mention in the Acts of the Apostles, who not only received command over the foot-soldiers and horse-soldiers and the governorship of Judaea, but had in marriage three princesses, one of whom was a grandchild of Antony and Cleopatra and a near kinswoman of Claudius himself, another was the sister of the king Agrippa. Yet this man was the brother of Pallas, first slave and then freedman.

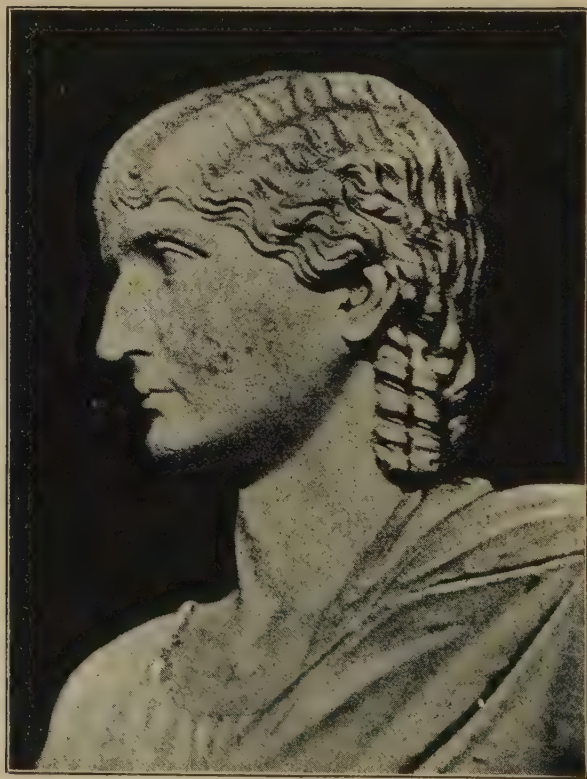


FIG. 93.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Head of the Statue in the Glyptothek, Munich.

Each of these favourites had his own circle of hangers-on, and many a man left no stone unturned to force his way into the ring. What wealth these men accumulated may be imagined from the saying that went about among the people when Claudius complained of the exhaustion of the imperial treasury, that if he would go third in sharing with Narcissus and Pallas in their plunder, he would fill his treasury to overflow ; and of the sumptuousness of their living one can get some



notion from what is said by Pliny of the slave Rotundus, who had passed from the household of Drusilla into that of Claudius, and who had been by him appointed to a position of financial trust in further Spain. The attendants on this man employed silver basins weighing each 250 lbs., and Rotundus himself one of double that weight, for the construction of which a separate workshop had been erected.

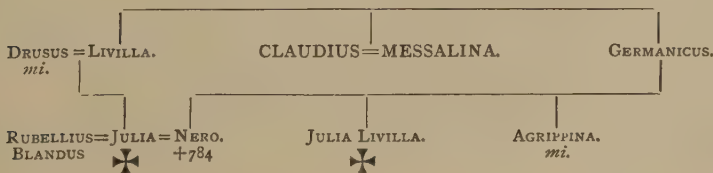
The influence of Messalina and the freedmen gradually advanced, but it was observable from the first. The two sisters of Caius, Agrippina and Julia Livilla, had been recalled from banishment by Claudius, and their property restored to them. As daughters of Germanicus, and therefore nieces of the emperor, as great-grandchildren of Augustus, as sisters of the last emperor, it was inevitable that they should form a centre around whom the dissatisfied would gather.

Agrippina was twenty-five, and in the full bloom of her womanly beauty. It had been with disgust and anger that she had submitted to the name of Claudius being given to her son, Lucius Domitius Nero, in mockery by her brother Caius, and with intent to offend her.

But that which had been done in mockery she now hailed as a stroke of good fortune; and the fact that her son bore the same name as the reigning prince encouraged her to hope that her good-natured uncle would favour and advance the boy. She stood well with Claudius; so also did her sister Julia, two years her junior, the wife of M. Vinicius. Julia was proud, beautiful, and perhaps lax in morals. She set herself so determinedly to gain the favour of her uncle, and to cross the influence of Messalina, that the latter was alarmed; and the pride of Julia, who refused to show the smallest token of deference or even courtesy to the empress, roused in Messalina a demon of exasperation that could be satisfied only with her destruction.

Messalina brought to the ear of Claudius charges against the moral conduct of Julia; and the easily governed old man, without so much as inquiring into the truth or falsehood of the charges, without even suffering his niece to defend herself, sentenced her to banishment; and soon after, at the command of Messalina, the young and beautiful woman was starved to death.

Agrippina was more cautious. She carefully avoided giving Messalina occasion to suspect that she was undermining her position; she never for a moment disguised from herself the peril in which she stood, and



how inevitable would be her destruction at the hands of the empress if she gave her the smallest suspicion that she was attempting to gain influence over the emperor.

If the fate of her sister, hurried away from Rome and put to death within a year of her recall, was a warning to Agrippina, that of her kinswoman Julia, the widow of her brother Nero, and grandchild of Tiberius, subsequently married to Rubellius Blandus, which followed within a twelvemonth, served to emphasise the warning. Julia, by her indiscreet repetition to her mother of the talk of Nero, had led to the arrest, imprisonment, and death of her first husband. Tiberius had then married her to a man outside the sacred family; but Julia was ill disposed to sink her ambition, and she had dared to approach her uncle and exert on him her flattery and caresses. Messalina was alarmed. Any woman who had access to Claudius might drop into his ears tales of her own conduct, and she hastened to forestall Julia by poisoning the mind of her husband against Julia, in precisely the same manner as she had found so successful with his niece, Julia Livilla. Claudius acted also in the same manner to one as to the other Julia. Afraid of having scandalous stories relative to the imperial family bruited about in Rome, he banished Julia, unheard, without investigation into the charges brought against her; and Messalina sent secret orders that she should be despatched in her exile by the sword of a centurion. In the case of neither Julia are we justified in condemning the accused unheard. It is quite as likely that both were innocent as that they were guilty. When Agrippina had lost her sister and her cousin, both sacrificed to the fears and jealousies of Messalina, she knew that her own life and that of her child were menaced, and that her only salvation lay in prudence and circumspection. She had sufficient knowledge of mankind to be sure that one so young, so reckless, so remorseless as Messalina must make herself many enemies and leave some side exposed, if but for a moment, when she would be able to deal her the blow that would release herself and child from hourly danger. It is, indeed, doubtful whether Agrippina would not have shared the fate of the two Julias, in spite of her caution, had not the attention of the young empress been otherwise engaged.

In her danger and isolation Agrippina cast about for a new husband, rich and powerful enough to protect her. And the man on whom her choice fell was Servius Sulpicius Galba. He was already in his forty-sixth year, but this difference in their ages was not a disadvantage in the eyes of a woman, trembling for her life, and above all for the future of her son. Galba belonged by his father's and mother's side to the noblest families of Rome. He was connected with the late empress Livia in a roundabout fashion. His father, after the decease of his mother, had married a lady who was related to the empress, and his stepmother adopted him; whereupon he changed his name to Lucius

Livius Ocella, a name which he bore at the time we are now considering, but which he abandoned on the death of Nero, and his own accession to the vacant throne. He had gained the favour of the empress Livia, through whose influence he obtained the consulship, and on her death Galba received a handsome legacy from her.

He was married to an Aemilia Lepida, who had borne him two sons, but she was probably in failing health. At all events she died soon after, and Agrippina, in her impatience to secure an adequate protector,



FIG. 94.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust, Capitoline Museum, No. 14.

disregarded the claims of the wife. Marriages in Rome were easily dissolved, and even if death did not sweep Lepida from the side of Galba, he might put her away for the sake of an imperial princess. But the plans of Agrippina were resented by the mother of Lepida, and by others of the family, and a scene occurred in an assembly of ladies. The mother of Lepida publicly proclaimed the designs of Agrippina, and in a quarrel that ensued boxed her ears.

Lepida died, and then Agrippina hoped to have secured Galba, but he refused her proffered hand and the risk that went with it, under the pretext that he had resolved not to marry again. He knew well enough that to take Agrippina was to attract the attention and incur the animosity of the all-powerful Messalina.

Disappointed of her hope, Agrippina was obliged to look to a man of less importance, and she chose the orator Crispus Passienus, a member of a respectable though not an ancient family, wealthy, and connected by marriage with families of more repute and higher antiquity. What victories Passienus had won were forensic, he had not served in the army, and therefore was not likely to awaken suspicions, as would have been the case with Galba.

Passienus had wit and considerable knowledge of mankind. Some of his sayings have been preserved, as one on Caligula, that 'no man made a better slave or a worse master;' and his definition of flattery as a lover against whom one closes, but does not lock, the door, and one is not greatly offended if, notwithstanding, the excluded one pushes in.

He could say sharp things, and some on the artificiality of the oratory of Julius Africanus, and on the avarice of the Domitian family were treasured.

Some of his speeches were read in the days of Quintilian, and his statue adorned the Basilica Julia. He had been married to Domitia, sister of Agrippina's first husband, Domitius Ahenobarbus; and when his wife brought an action against her brother for some money left her in a will of which she conceived herself to be defrauded, Passienus endeavoured to compromise the matter. He made on the occasion a celebrated speech that did credit to his heart and his common sense. He represented to the contesting parties that they belonged to a family of splendid antecedents, that they were bound to each other by the ties of blood, that neither was without every advantage that could be afforded by fortune, and he concluded with the words: 'And then—after all said—that about which you are striving is precisely that which neither of you needs at all.' But Domitia wanted every denarius that was her due. She was grasping to meanness, though herself rich, and her husband supremely so. Junius Bassus said

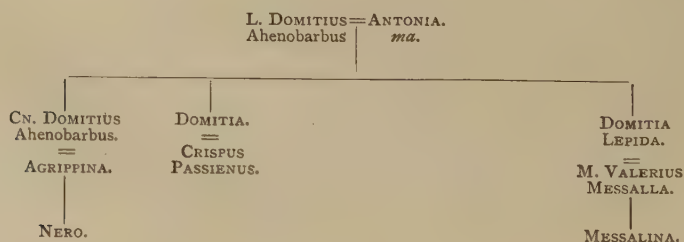






FIG. 95.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust in the Capitoline Museum.

of her that she sold her old shoes. When taxed with having said this, 'No, by Hercules,' he answered, 'I said—not that, but that she only bought second-hand shoes.'

Such a wife as this was unsuitable to Crispus Passienus, and as Agrippina knew that he was about to divorce her, she offered him her hand. He accepted it, and Domitia was divorced. Domitia remained the mortal enemy of Agrippina, and survived her rival, but only for a short while, as Nero poisoned the avaricious old lady, his aunt, to obtain her enormous fortune.

The union of Agrippina with Passienus, who was much older than herself, lasted several years; in the fourth year of Claudius he was made consul, but died probably soon after, and left his vast fortune to his widow and her son, Nero. He seems to have been an amiable as well as a witty man, and Pliny mentions a particular, relative to him, that shows him to have been a lover of nature. Near Tusculum, on a hill, stood a remarkably fine beech, under which the old orator was wont to repose on a hot day and sip his wine; and, grateful to the tree for its pleasant shade, the kindly old fellow would put his arms about the trunk and kiss it before departing into the full glare of the summer sun.

#### V.—DETERIORATION.

At first Claudius, in his desire to limit expenditure when the treasury was empty, had allowed the various festivals of the year to pass without any shows to amuse the people. Even his own birth-day was suffered to pass without notice; but when the populace showed signs of impatience, he deemed it expedient, or was advised that it was expedient, to humour the Plebs Romana with the usual sports. Accordingly he invited them, not long after his birth-day, to an unceremonious and hastily got up meal in the circus, attended with games and exhibitions of various sorts, but all without much display, and lasting but a few days. This he called his 'sportula' or picnic basket. It was, however, noticed that Claudius seemed mightily to enjoy the novelty of entertaining the people, receiving their cheers, and mixing with his guests on a familiar footing. He counted out with his own hands the gold pieces which he gave to the winners in the games, addressed the people as 'Sirs!' cut insipid jokes with them, and was delighted that, however far-fetched they might be, they elicited laughter and applause. One of these is preserved. There was a gladiator named Palumbes (a wood-dove), and when the people called out for their favourite, repeating his name vociferously, Claudius shouted in reply, 'Catch your pigeon first, and then you shall have him!' which naturally provoked much merriment.

On one occasion a gladiator having been defeated, his four sons ran forward and bent the knee, supplicating Claudius to spare their father's

A. U. C. 795.  
A. D. 42.  
Act. 51.



FIG. 96.—CLAUDIUS. Bust from the Farnese Collection, Mus. Nation., Naples.

life. This he did readily, and immediately scribbled in his diptychs, 'See what an advantage it is to have children. You have here an example how useful they may be in procuring favour and security even to a gladiator!' and passed this round the amphitheatre for all the spectators to read.

Unhappily success having attended this beginning of entertaining the people, the stupid old man was so vastly pleased that he resolved to give more such exhibitions, and gladiatorial fights became common. Claudius was specially incensed against those slaves and freedmen who in the last reign had ruined their masters and obtained the spoliation of their goods and their execution. All such as were known to have thus acted were arrested and condemned to the beasts, and thus for some time the execution of criminals deserving their fate served the purpose of amusing the people, who loved nothing better than much bloodshed.

But not only was Claudius pampering a depraved appetite in the people, but he was blunting his own sense of pity. Some glimmering consciousness that this wholesale butchery was repugnant to good-feeling, and would have annoyed Augustus, did creep into his dull mind, and he ordered the statues of this emperor to be veiled, and then to be removed entirely from a place where so much blood flowed. This was almost certainly due to reminiscences of words that had fallen from the lips of the great founder of the empire, expressive of loathing at these butcheries.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius, as we have seen, declined to witness them, so distasteful were they to him personally, and he also may have been influenced by the same expression of opinion by Augustus that actuated Claudius in veiling and removing the statues. The taste for such spectacles grew with Claudius, and soon the usual number of games did not suffice, so that he added fresh ones on one excuse or another. He was always first in his seat, and he did not leave it at midday when the usual pause took place for refreshment. During that time, when the audience had dispersed, he had beasts or men brought in for bloody interludes.

With singular bad taste, one day when two gladiators simultaneously ran each other through, he ordered their swords to be brought him and turned into knives for his table.

Soon ingenuity was set to work to vary the scenes. At one time a single man was set to fight an elephant; at another a lion was exhibited eating a man; then came races; artificial forests were set up in which wild beasts were hunted—much as we see it in the mosaic floor now in the Villa Borghese—or there was a sea-fight, or on another occasion the storming and sacking of a town.

<sup>1</sup> We know from Suetonius (Nero. 4), that Augustus remonstrated privately with Domitius for exhibiting cruel fights of gladiators, and when Domitius disregarded this private monition he restrained him by public edict.



Whilst these exhibitions filled the rabble with enthusiasm for an emperor so gracious and so ready to amuse them at the public cost, the wiser and better men in Rome were saddened at the deterioration in the character of a really well-meaning and kind-hearted ruler. Messalina and the freedmen stimulated him to pursue this course, which distracted his mind from their proceedings, and which, by blunting his moral sense, placed him more completely in their hands to serve as a tool for the destruction of those who were their personal enemies, or whose fortunes they coveted.

He had never recovered the terror of the night of the murder of Caius, and was always easily alarmed for himself; it was, therefore, sufficient for those who were about him to suggest that he was endangered to obtain from him an order for the removal of those who were said to threaten his life. Accustomed daily in the arena to see blood shed, the sense of the sacredness of human life was lost, and he was known to sign a warrant for the execution of certain persons, and then to wonder at their not appearing at his table to dine with him, and to send for them. Consequently it was to the interest of those who obtained death-warrants from him to have them executed with promptitude.

The first sacrifice of this kind was that of Appius Junius Silanus, the step-father of Messalina, and father of the youth whom Claudius had designed to be the husband of Octavia, his daughter by Messalina. The reason why Messalina had resolved on his destruction was never known, and that given by Suetonius is mere conjecture. In some way or other he had incurred her resentment, and with the aid of the freedman Narcissus she compassed his destruction.

To work up the mind of Claudius to the requisite condition of nervous apprehension, it was announced that a man had been discovered near the imperial bed-chamber wearing a dagger. A morning or two after this Narcissus rushed into the presence of his master, and, prostrating himself before him, told him that he had dreamed that he, Claudius, had fallen by the hand of Appius. Messalina seconded the attempt of Narcissus to frighten the weak old man by saying that she also had been disturbed during the night by precisely the same dream. In the meantime a messenger had been sent to Appius to summon him to the imperial bed-chamber, and he entered when the emperor was bewildered and quaking with the imaginary terrors infused into him by the designing freedman and the empress. Claudius at once, without consideration, gave orders for the execution of the accused; and so convinced was he of the guilt of the victim, that next day he related all the circumstances to the senate, and publicly thanked Narcissus for having his interests so at heart that he watched over them even in his sleep.

This act of violence had more far-reaching consequences than

Messalina and her assistants expected. At the accession of Claudius, Rome was in a condition of feverish excitement, and although the agitation of spirits had been allayed by the prudence and moderation with which the new prince had initiated his rule, yet a substratum of suspicion had remained; the feebleness of his mental and moral nature was fully appreciated, and it was known that the character of the government would depend on the sort of persons who gained influence over the mind of the ruler. For a while it was hoped that Claudius was in the hands of men of judgment and virtue, and of this the measures adopted by him seemed an assurance. But Messalina and the freedmen held too compactly together about the throne for the voices of the wise and just to reach the prince, and they set to work to destroy or drive away every one who attempted, in any way, to disturb them in their absolute control of the springs of power. Some of the best men were put to death or sent into banishment, others withdrew voluntarily from an unequal contest.

Among these banished was L. Annaeus Seneca, who had been accused by Messalina of criminal association with the unfortunate Julia Livilla, sister of Agrippina; but we are perhaps justified in suspecting that the real cause of his removal was that his upright mind and clear sense of the duties of government obtained recognition from Claudius, and that the prince was inclined to follow his advice.

The exile of a man of such worth had alarmed the first men in the state, and produced very general dissatisfaction among them; and now the precipitate execution, on the most frivolous grounds, of a man closely allied to the imperial household, showed them that the emperor was completely withdrawn from the guidance of men of repute, and was fallen helpless under the control of a parcel of servants and a dissolute wife. The prospect was one to alarm all.

About this time, when spirits were thus disturbed, there arrived a letter from Seneca to his mother, Helvia, intended for publication, and rapidly circulated in Rome. The object—the avowed object—of this letter was to show that a true stoic philosopher carried in himself the source of consolation, whatever might befall him. If banished, he conveyed his virtues with him, and they sustained him in the midst of adversity. But there were significant references to the martyrs of Caesarean tyranny, to M. Marcellus, to M. Cato, and to Brutus, the murderer of Caesar.

Several members of the senate were uneasy as to their safety, having taken a prominent part against Claudius, either for the Republic or for themselves, in the January days of the former year; and these men were determined to make an attempt to free the state from the bondage into which it had fallen, and which was degrading enough under the mad youth Caius, but was more degrading still when its taskmasters and drivers were emancipated slaves and a wanton girl. Among these

men was M. Annius Vinicianus, who had been a pretender to the throne on the fall of Caius, and who, as nephew to the murdered Julia Livilla, expected to be the next victim. His plans fell in with those of M. Furius Camillus Scribonianus, who stood at the head of the Dalmatian legion. Italy, cleared of troops, lay defenceless before this general; the dissatisfaction with the new prince was spreading, and the incapacity of the emperor to resist a military invasion was obvious. These considerations had awoke in Scribonianus the thought to dethrone Claudius and assume his place. He speedily came to an understanding with M. Vinicianus, who was to act for him in Rome. He drew his forces together, received their oath of allegiance, and sent the emperor a letter full of reproaches and threats, demanding his resignation, and assuring him personal safety in the event of his offering no armed resistance. The effect of this letter on Claudius answered all the expectations of Scribonianus. Conscious of his weakness, paralysed with terror, he called together the first men of the state and consulted with them as to the form of resignation of the throne. Senators and knights left the city in troops to join the general in his camp, among them the consul of the former year, Pomponius, against whom P. Suillius, the devoted tool of Messalina, had brought charges, menacing his life. The bulk of the people looked on and waited, in supreme indifference as to the result.

But tidings of a different complexion reached Rome five days later. The soldiers of Scribonianus had reconsidered the proclamation of their leader, were by no means worked to enthusiasm for his cause by the promises of political liberty, and they had no grievances of which to complain under the rule of Claudius that would induce them to take up arms. When the standards, frozen into the ground, resisted the attempt to raise them, and wreaths thrown about the eagles slipped off, the soldiers regarded these as warnings from the gods that their revolt was not favoured by heaven; taking alarm, they turned against their general and his lieutenants who had endeavoured to involve them in rebellion. They fell on and murdered their officers. Scribonianus, indeed, effected his escape to the island of Issa, but was pursued and either threw himself on his own sword, or was run through by one of his soldiers, whilst in the arms of his wife.

The legions that had behaved with such unexpected fidelity were loaded with favours by the Caesar. The seventh and eleventh received the honourable titles of Claudian, Pious, Faithful. The soldier who claimed to have dealt the death-blow to the rebel general was promoted to high honours, as were also those who professed to have hacked to death their traitorous officers.

The collapse of the insurrection was complete. Those most compromised laid violent hands on themselves, or were sentenced by Claudius to death, but with a preservation of the outward form of

legality; for the trial of the conspirators took place before the senate, in the presence of Claudius; though the officers of the guard, and the all-powerful freedmen were also called in. The emperor, seated between the two consuls on the curule chair, demanded of the conscript fathers the punishment of the accused who were brought into their midst, and then, taking his place among the senators on his usual bench, saw that his demand was complied with. In his terror he forgot the regulations he had made against the reception of testimony from slaves; he now invited denunciations from every quarter. He forgot also his solemn undertaking never to employ the rack against free-born Romans. Citizens, knights, and senators were tortured; men and women thrown into prison, and their bodies were soon after cast down the Gemonian stairs. Those who had taken to flight were pursued, their heads cut off and exposed in the forum.

It need hardly be said that the hands of Messalina and the freedmen were at work in stirring the nervous terrors of the prince to frenzy, and in obtaining thereby the removal of every one against whom they bore a grudge or entertained mistrust. They brought accusations against a host of wealthy persons, and took heavy bribes to let these accusations fall. The consequence was that the public executions lost all their moral significance, and the mockery of the people broke out amidst the ghastly scenes of blood. When Claudius addressed the senate with a quotation from the *Odyssey*, which he had already used when addressing the soldiers—

‘Repel the foe when he first rancour shows,’

the preceding verse was whispered from one to another in the assembly—

‘But I am young, and trust not yet my bands,’

the fathers in bitter irony representing the emperor in the execution of judgment as a quaking youth.

Even during the course of the trials a gleam of mirth flashed through the gloom. When the all-powerful Narcissus in court taunted a freedman of Scribonianus with ‘What would you have done, Galeosus, had your master become sovereign?’ he received the curt reply, ‘I would have stood behind his chair and held my tongue.’

But even in the midst of these executions, provoked by his terrors, the kindly nature of Claudius did not quite forsake him. Contrary to custom, he remitted the penalties that affected the children of those condemned to death, and refused to allow the confiscation of their goods. The name of Scribonianus was erased from the consular fasti, and his widow was obliged to leave Rome, but his son retained his father’s property, and succeeded to his place in the college of the Arval brothers.

On the 1st January A.D. 43 Lucius Vitellius entered on a consul-



ship he was to hold for six months. His colleague whose name we do not know died shortly after his appointment, and Claudius stepped into his place as consul suffect—the third time he held the consulship.<sup>1</sup> He still held the office when he resolved on his British campaign.

A. U. C. 796.  
A. D. 43.  
Act. 52.

The important position taken by L. Vitellius justifies at this point a short account of him and his family. The Vitellii originated at Nuceria in Apulia, and laid claims to great antiquity and importance. But some said these claims were more imaginary than real, and they related that the ancestor of the family was a cobbler whose son had married the daughter of a baker, and that they had raised themselves into importance and wealth by denunciations, and by buying up the estates of those who fell under their accusations, so that a son of the Vitellius who married the baker's daughter was raised to the rank of a knight. This man, Publius Vitellius, was a financial agent under Augustus, and left four sons, Aulus, Quintus, Publius, and Lucius, all of whom became senators. Of these, Aulus was famed for his love of splendour and the good table he kept; he died while consul suffect A.D. 32. Quintus was quaestor under Augustus, but was forced to leave the senate in A.D. 18. Publius had been the companion of Germanicus on the Rhine, had accompanied him to the east, and had prosecuted Cn. Piso on the accusation of having poisoned Germanicus; in reward he received the priestly office from the senate at the recommendation of Tiberius. After having been invested with the Praetorship, he was made governor of Bithynia, where he struck medals in honour of his former general and friend, Germanicus. He was accused in A.D. 31 of being involved in the conspiracy of Sejanus, but was committed to the charge of his brother, probably Aulus, and opened his veins. They were bound up again, but he never thoroughly recovered the loss of blood, and died shortly after.

Lucius Vitellius, the youngest of the four brothers, was married about the time that Tiberius came to the throne to Sextilia, a lady of noble family and of nobler character. In A.D. 34 he was consul, and next year governor of Syria, where he had shown great ability and judgment under difficult circumstances. He was, however, recalled by Caius in A.D. 40, who meditated putting him to death, but he was saved by his base adulation. With veiled head he approached the tyrant, at every moment turning his face aside, as though unable to endure the dazzling glory of his majesty; he flung himself at the feet of Caius and adored him as God, and entreated him, in the event of his being favoured with life, to be allowed to do sacrifice to his divinity. This gross flattery not only saved his life, but raised him into favour. The emperor numbered him among his friends, and L. Vitellius was careful by persistence in flattery to secure himself in this position. On

<sup>1</sup> So an inscription at Tibur.

one occasion when the mad prince was boasting to him of his intimacy with the moon-goddess, with that mixture of malice and craving for admiration which caused him to lay traps for his associates, he suddenly turned on Vitellius and asked if he had seen him on the preceding night in converse with the goddess. The ready flatterer lowered his eyes and answered, 'Sire, it is permitted to divinities only to see each other.'

By such means Vitellius obtained a position of great influence at the court of Caius, and on a change of prince he readily adapted himself to the new situation. Measuring the feebleness of Claudius at once, and rightly judging that he could himself obtain no direct control over him because elbowed into an outer circle, he devoted himself to pay homage to Messalina and the freedmen, Pallas and



FIG. 97.—MESSALINA. Sardonyx in the Cabinet des Medailles, Paris.

Narcissus. He erected golden images of the latter among his household gods, and stooping to the feet of the empress, requested that as the highest privilege that could be accorded, he might be suffered to wear one of her slippers in his bosom. When this was allowed, he ostentatiously drew it thence at no rare intervals, and kissed it with visible emotion.

This was the man whom Claudius appointed to be consul for the year, and when he resolved on an expedition to Britain he placed the reins of government and command over the troops in his hands.

The absence of Claudius on this expedition lasted somewhat over six months, and during his absence what little remains of restraint had held Messalina from full indulgence in her caprices were cast aside. It was said in Rome that she had as lovers Plautius Lateranus, Suillius Caesoninus, a kinsman of P. Suillius, and above all, Vettius Valens,

imperial physician, the founder of a new medical school, and a man of large fortune. But it must be remembered that most of the scandalous gossip was collected by Agrippina, her personal enemy, and stored in her memoirs, from whence Tacitus and Suetonius derived their narratives of her profligacy, and that Seneca, a man whose banishment she had obtained, and whose writings contain much anecdotal material relative to the period, says not a single word against her moral character. That she swept out of her path by the sword of the executioner all who opposed her, or whose wealth excited her greed, is certain; these matters could not be disguised or denied, but we have no such guarantee for the truthfulness of the painting of her private depravity. The trials and condemnations were recorded in official registers, not the names of the lovers of Messalina, nor her escapades.

Besides removing out of their way all such men as they supposed to be dangerous, the empress and freedmen drove a shameless trade in the sale of privileges and offices. Roman citizenship was sold by them not to individuals only, but to cities, so that at length it was said that the market value of citizenship had fallen to the cost of 'a pair of glass sherds.' They laid their hands on the courts of law and secured favourable or adverse sentences, according as they were bribed. Governorships of provinces, praetorships, offices of all kinds, were put up to sale. Finally they monopolised the whole trade of the city, so that the influx of commodities was hindered, and Claudius was obliged to interfere to prevent famine and a riot.

With the expedition of Claudius to Britain we will not concern ourselves; his return was welcomed by the senate, that perhaps hoped some check might be placed on the proceedings of the empress and her colleagues. A triumph was decreed to him, an honour not altogether unmerited. He assumed in token of his exploits the title of Britannicus, an appellation that descended to his infant son, and superseded in history the name of Tiberius Claudius Germanicus, by which he had been previously known.

The triumph of Claudius was followed by the bestowal of many gracious distinctions, both civil and military, on deserving officers of the state, but also on some whose claims were more than questionable. Among these latter was the empress herself, to whom the fond husband accorded a seat of honour by his side on all public occasions, and permission to employ the *carpentum*, the state chariot, on great solemnities; and indeed she attended in his triumph seated in the gilded *carpentum*.

A. U. C. 797.  
A. D. 44.  
Act. 53.

The usual games and banquets attended the triumph, and Claudius indulged himself in the pleasure of seeing men fight with beasts and with each other, and also with the pleasures of the table, to which he was equally addicted. His love of good food and good wine was proverbial, and as almost daily his table was spread for six hundred

guests, his excesses became public. It was noted that at his board the banqueters sat instead of adopting the usual recumbent posture; no restraint was exercised, Claudius laughed and talked and drank with all, till his head sank on his bosom and he fell back in his chair.

When one among the guests, T. Vinius, a man of praetorian family, carried off the golden cup out of which he had been drinking at the imperial table, Claudius did not exclude him from his company, but on the next occasion had an earthenware mug set in his place, whereas all the rest at table were furnished with drinking vessels of precious metal.

Apparently during the absence of Claudius in Britain the senate ordered the recall of all the bronze coinage of Caligula, that it might be melted up, in order as far as possible to obliterate the memory of Caius; but as a silver medal was certainly struck on the return of Claudius, bearing his head on one side and that of his predecessor on the other, it would seem that he was not altogether satisfied with what had been done, and that he struck this medal to himself as conqueror of Britain, and to his nephew who had also undertaken an expedition against Britain, as a token that he wished to reconcile the public mind in some measure to that nephew. Moreover, the molten coins were not used for recoinage, but were employed, at the suggestion of Messalina, for a bronze statue to Mnester, the favourite actor whom Messalina had withdrawn from the public stage. Perhaps, at the same time, the marble altar bearing the name of Mnester was erected, which has been found in Rome.

Mnester was vastly popular from his dramatic talents, and the people resented the fact that he was withdrawn from the stage by Messalina, and with loud cries called for him to appear. The emperor, who alone knew nothing of the circumstances, endeavoured to allay the tumult by taking a solemn oath before the assembled populace that he was not holding back the actor from them, and that he did not know where he was—a proceeding that converted their resentment into hilarity at the expense of the prince. Claudius had himself caused the withdrawal of the actor, who had resisted the allurements of Messalina, till she complained to her husband of his churlishness, whereupon Claudius had ordered him to submit to the dictation of the empress; then she had received him among her own retainers in the palace, and he ceased to appear on the stage. That this story, which seems incredible, is, at all events, based on truth, would appear from the subsequent trial and execution of Mnester, when he actually pleaded the command of Claudius as his exculpation for the charges brought against him.

We may pass on from the year A.D. 44 to 47; for in the intermediate years the condition of affairs had not materially altered. The husband of Agrippina, Crispus Passienus, had indeed been appointed consul, and T. Vinicius, the husband of Julia, who had been put to death by



Messalina, had died—it was supposed by poison, administered by order of the empress. Very different statements are made as to the reasons why he incurred her animosity, which, if not absolutely incompatible, show that there was no certain ground for laying the guilt of his death on the already burdened head of Messalina. ‘When we find that the overthrow of Vinicius,’ says Dean Merivale, ‘was effected by no overt act, no public charge and judicial sentence, but was popularly ascribed to the occult agency of poison, administered by the contrivance of the empress, a cloud of distrust must be allowed to rest on the whole story.’

We have now again the advantage of the guidance of Tacitus, for the great chasm in his *Annals*, that reaches from the accession of Caius to the seventh year of Claudius, is overpassed; and when we again take up his record we meet at once with the misdeeds of Messalina.<sup>1</sup>

A.U.C. 800.  
A.D. 47.  
Act. 56.

Valerius Asiaticus had been chosen consul for the second time for the year A.D. 46. He was a native of Vienne, in Gaul, on the Rhone; he had won the friendship of Caius, and had by him been advanced to the consulship. But a gross insult launched by the tyrant at the wife of Asiaticus had so exasperated him that he entered into the plot for his destruction, and after the death of Caligula, he it was who had the boldness to stand up in the forum before the excited populace and frankly express his regret that his own hand had not freed Rome from the monster. Not only so, but he had been one of the candidates for the vacant throne. Since the accession of Claudius he had maintained his independence, without incurring the resentment of the emperor. His brother was one of the confidential friends of Claudius; he himself had the prefecture of the city confided to him, and when, in A.D. 45, the senate showed signs of dissatisfaction with the measures of Claudius in curtailing their privileges, to pacify them Valerius Asiaticus was designated consul for the ensuing year. He, however, voluntarily resigned; not because he dreaded the expense—every consul being expected to provide two races in the circus every month—but because he was afraid of being brought into prominence and so attracting the suspicion and jealousies of those around the prince. The more to secure himself, he retired along with his wife to Crete.

On the last night of the year the moon was eclipsed, and news reached Rome that at the same time the Aegean Sea had boiled around Thera, and that a new island had risen to the surface. These were taken as signs of revolution in the state. The Chaldaean astrologers and the augurs added their prognostications, and the commotion of spirits became general. Not least agitated by the tidings of signs in heaven and earth was the timorous old emperor, and Messalina and the freedmen, at the height of their power, used the nervous fears in which

<sup>1</sup> For A.D. 46 we have not even the help of Dio, and we do not obtain that of Tacitus till the following year.

he was plunged to goad him to fresh violences. Yet a certain sense of degradation in his subjection to these unworthy ministers hung over his spirits, and he made feeble and ineffectual efforts to shake himself free. Nor did the people hesitate to let him understand what was their opinion in the matter. When, one day, in the theatre, an actor declaimed the line—

‘Intolerable is it when a false slave stands in luck,’

all eyes were turned upon the favourite freedman Polybius; but he, with cool impudence, rose and exclaimed: ‘And yet the same poet says—

“And ill it is to have a ruler who was once a goatherd,”’

a reference to the humiliation of Claudius in his early life, that was at once understood and applauded. Claudius refused to listen to a number of accusations brought before him by his freedmen, and when these involved men of no political importance, he said laughingly, ‘We do not proceed against fleas as we do against lions and tigers.’

But with a man of the mental and moral calibre of Claudius, an effort to be free never lasted long, nor was he ever sufficiently resolute to effect a change. He settled back after each struggle into more complete thralldom than before. It was so on every occasion; and in the listlessness that supervened he suffered his advisers to obtain from him the condemnation to death of numerous persons, whose only guilt in many cases consisted in their dislike of the rule of a woman and of emancipated slaves.

Cn. Pompeius, the husband of Antonia, and son-in-law of Claudius, was the first victim. A charge of shameless immorality was brought against him; but the real reason why he was removed was that the daughter of the emperor might be given to Cornelius Faustus Sulla, half-brother of the empress. Both the parents of Pompeius, Crassus Frugi, a man ‘so big a fool that he might as well have been a king,’ and ‘as like Claudius as is one egg to another,’ and his wife Scribonia, were put to death.

Then followed charges against Poppaea Sabina and Valerius Asiaticus. The father of Sabina, C. Poppaeus Sabinus, had not sprung from a noble family, but he had been a useful servant of the state under Augustus and Tiberius, and had been advanced to the highest honours. He had been consul in A.D. 9, and after that, for twenty-four years had been governor of Moesia, Macedonia, and Achaia, and in A.D. 26 had received the insignia of a triumph. His daughter, the most beautiful woman of the time, was married to T. Ollius, and had borne him a daughter before the fall of Sejanus, in A.D. 31, when he was involved, and perished. Through the death of her father, Poppaea had acquired his fortune, and she had entered into a new marriage with the senator, L. Cornelius Scipio, and together with him she was a constant guest at the

table of the emperor. Beautiful beyond every other woman, eclipsing Messalina, she had incurred her envy, and when the empress suspected, or fancied that she suspected, that Poppaea cast admiring glances at the actor Mnester, she resolved on her death.

Valerius Asiaticus—though to escape danger he had gone to Crete—could not carry with him his gardens. These occupied the Pincian Hill, and were those that had formerly belonged to Lucullus; but he had spent much on enhancing their beauty, beautiful as they had been before. Messalina resolved on effecting at one stroke the destruction of Poppaea, whose beauty she envied, and of Valerius, whose gardens she coveted. She induced Sosibius, tutor to her boy Britannicus, to express in the ear of Claudius his concern at the influence and ambition of Asiaticus, who had just then come to Baiae from Crete. Sosibius hinted that Asiaticus was at the head of a large dissatisfied party in Rome; that owing to his birth at Vienne, he would be acceptable to the legions drawn from Gaul; that his residence in Crete had been designed for the purpose of engaging the Orientals in a general rising, and that his return to Italy was but the first stage on his journey into Gaul to raise the standard of revolt.

Claudius, without further inquiry, sent Crispinus, praefect of the guards, in all haste to Baiae at the head of a large body of soldiers. Asiaticus was brought in chains to Rome. Then Suillius, the base agent of Messalina, appeared, and brought his charge, not before the senate, but before the emperor in person, in his palace. He declared that Asiaticus had been guilty of fomenting rebellion, of adultery with Poppaea, and of the basest forms of sensuality. Asiaticus remained silent, treating these accusations with lofty disregard, till the last was produced, when the spirit of the Roman noble was roused within him, and he hurled it from him with angry disgust. Then he entered on an energetic and passionate defence, which produced a visible effect on the emperor. Messalina was present, and was wrought to tears; but as she slipped out to conceal her emotion, she whispered to Vitellius, 'Let him not escape.' The fate of Asiaticus trembled in the balance. The emperor was inclined to believe in his innocence, and to dismiss him. Then Vitellius threw himself at his feet. He recalled to his memory the devotion of both Asiaticus and his mother to the sovereign, he pleaded his services during the campaign in Britain, he urged his own intimacy with the accused, and then entreated, as a consequence, that Valerius might be permitted to *choose his own mode of death*.

Claudius, bewildered and incapable of forming an independent resolution, gave his gracious consent. Asiaticus was led away, and prepared himself for death. His friends urged him to the comparatively easy mode of starvation: he declined the suggestion; bathed, seated himself cheerfully at table, and after supper rose and looked at the

funeral pyre in process of construction in his gardens. He pointed out that it was too near a clump of ancient and beautiful trees, that might be injured by the flames, and had the heap of combustibles removed to another spot. Then he opened his veins, and died, saying that he regretted that he had not fallen under the sullen jealousy of Tiberius, or the fury of Caligula, and that he must become the victim of the base devices of a woman, and the craft of a creature as foul as Vitellius.

Messalina lost no time in communicating to Poppaea that her doom was sealed, that orders had been issued for her to be cast into prison; and the unhappy, despairing woman, to escape the shame of the Gemonian stairs, put herself to death.

Of all this Claudius was kept in ignorance, and when, a few days later, at his invitation Scipio appeared at his table as a guest, the emperor inquired why Poppaea, his wife, had not accompanied him. 'I have just lost her,' replied the husband, and seated himself. The case against Poppaea was proceeded with before the senate as though she were alive, and Scipio was asked his verdict in his proper order. 'I think on Poppaea's offence as do the others,' he said, knowing that in the general opinion she was regarded as the victim to the jealousy of the empress.

At the same time two knights of the name of Petra were involved in the accusation. It was pretended that their house had served Poppaea as a place of meeting with Mnester, but little or no evidence on this point was produced; the main charge against the brothers was that one or other of them had dreamed that Claudius had appeared, his head wreathed with bleached vine-leaves, and had explained this dream as portending the death of the emperor at the time of vintage. Both thereupon were sent to execution.

Those engaged in the detection and defeat of the imaginary revolt of Asiaticus before it had broken out were richly rewarded. To Crispinus were decreed the insignia of the praetorship and fifteen hundred thousand sesterces; and to Sosibius ten hundred thousand, on the motion of Vitellius, 'for services rendered to Britannicus by his instructions, and to Claudius by his counsels.'

Suillius continued thenceforth to prosecute his avocation of accuser with unremitting ardour, and he had many imitators. 'The prince, by taking into his own hands the arbitrary dispensation of the laws, and the authority of the magistrates, had opened a wide field for rapine,' says Tacitus. Here we see the difference between these cases of judicial murder and those under Tiberius. Claudius and Caius tried the accused themselves, and themselves pronounced judgment. This Tiberius did only in the case of the murderers of his son Drusus. All the rest who were condemned were so by the regular tribunals and in the ordinary course of law.

The age of Messalina was now twenty-three, and she was at the





FIG. 98.—MESSALINA. Bust in the Uffizi Palace, Florence.

zenith of her power. We may here tarry a while to consider her personal appearance, as we know it from the portraits that remain.

Unhappily the medals do not afford us a satisfactory basis on which to determine her face, for although of these there are several, yet none of them have sufficient individuality about them to distinguish them, and but for the legend they might be taken as representations of the elder Agrippina or of Antonia. But we are better off with the cameos. In the famous Sardonyx of Vienna, bearing two pairs of heads rising out of horns of plenty, those on the left represent Claudius and Messalina, facing them are Tiberius and Livia idealised, and yet in my opinion unmistakable.

Messalina is here represented with her hair in small curls covered with a species of crown wreathed with corn. This is the usual mark of the deification of an empress as Ceres. The brow is low, the nose straight and a little *rétroussé* at the end, the mouth remarkable for the thinness of the lips; the chin is not prominent, and a peculiar feature is the slope from the chin to the throat, forming a marked contrast in formation to that of Livia opposite. The mouth turns down, but there is a slight contraction in the corner.

Among statues believed to represent Messalina is one in the Louvre, which was found before the Porta S. Lorenzo at Rome near where the gardens of Pallas are supposed to have lain. This statue represents a lady with the *palla* drawn over her head, and she holds a little boy on her left arm. The boy is supposed to be Britannicus. There is, however, nothing in the statue to lead us to conclude that it represents an empress and her son, and the features of the lady have not the slightest resemblance to that in the Vienna sardonyx.

There is a bust in the Villa Albani that is supposed to be Messalina, but though a fine bust, it is without individuality and has no resemblance to the cameo head. It is quite another matter with the bust in the Uffizi palace, Florence. The profile there has a remarkable likeness to the type-giving face on the cameo. The hair is in curls, but hangs down in plaits behind, the brow is low, the eyes full, and the mouth with its thin lips and cruel expression seems thoroughly to express the character of the woman as known to us by history. The head is flat, without any of the imaginative faculties developed, and the forehead is also flat. There is insolence in the mouth, and a curl in the corner, noticeable also in the gem. One eye is larger than the other. They are not in line. The nose has been restored, so that we cannot compare it with that on the cameo. The rest agrees perfectly, though the slope from the chin is not so perceptible in the bust owing to the difference in position of the head. The brows are straight, not arched. Not only are the eyes of different shapes, but the chin is on one side. The end of the chin is square, the mouth is small, the lips fuller on the left side than on the right, and the right corner

drawn up. The expression of the face is different when seen from each side, owing to the singular lack of uniformity in the sides of the face. In the same gallery is a so-called young Britannicus, and the resemblance of this child as far as the formation of the lower part of the face goes to the Messalina above described is remarkable. Still more remarkable is that of the beautiful statue in the Lateran, where the resemblance is very close. The boy's lips are fuller, but the whole structure of the jaws and chin, and the curl of the lower lip, are the same as in the Messalina of Florence. If this be Britannicus then the bust at Florence is that of his mother; and it is hard to say who else can be intended by this charming statue in military costume.

A medical man of large experience, who at my request studied the bust of Messalina in the Florence gallery, informs me that it is that of a woman physically unsound, the flattening of the top of the head indicates an imperfect mental development, and the general aspect of the face, evidently a close study from life without any attempt at hiding blemishes and idealising, is that of a woman whose span of life would naturally be short. There would probably be malformation of the chest. The face is that of one with feverish blood, whose flame of life burnt too fast. The face is not in itself sensual, not at all animal, but it is insolent and cruel. The low flat brow as well as the low flat head show that she was deficient in all the higher and nobler qualities. In this bust the formation of the throat is peculiar. M. Mayor remarks, 'Thin lips, evil smile, ears hardly visible, jaw advancing, remarkably massive, eyes close together, profoundly sunk under their arcade, nostrils fine, flexible, nose pointed (restored), lips asymmetrical, the upper lip lifted on the right, as in a beast preparing to bite, the same characteristic feature observed in Caligula and commented on by Darwin. Facial asymmetry. The left eye highest and furthest from the nose (the same noticeable in Nero and Claudius, etc.). The look cruel rather than voluptuous. *Ignis intus urit*. An ironical smile, the by no means uncommon mask worn by pathological corruption and nymphomania. Elaborate coiffure; the hair curled with affectation. Brow low.'

The bust given in the catalogue as Messalina in the Capitoline Museum is that of a *bonne mère* of over forty. As Messalina died at the age of twenty-four, it cannot possibly represent her.

There is a bust in the Torlonia gallery thought to represent her, but not only is it very inferior as a work of art, but it has also been much restored, the entire nose being new. The dressing of the hair is the same as the Florentine bust, and there are the same flatness of the top of the head, and hardness of the mouth with its cruel smirk. But it is apparently the head of a woman of over thirty, and the face is much longer. This may represent her mother; if it were intended for Messalina, she must have prematurely oldened. Moreover, there is not

the aspect of fragility in the Torlonia head that there is in that at Florence, nor is there the frank fidelity to nature in representing all the natural crookedness of the real face.

#### VI.—THE END OF MESSALINA.

THE 21st April was the centenary festival of the foundation of Rome. The city had completed, according to the ordinary computation, eight centuries of fame and of growing importance and splendour, and although Augustus, following a pontifical tradition which antedated the foundation of the city by sixty-three years, had celebrated the secular games for the sixth time of their observance, yet Claudius seized the occasion of the 21st April being the eight hundredth anniversary according to popular reckoning, to perform them with extraordinary splendour, and he combined therewith a triumph accorded to Aulus Plautius, the able officer who had subjugated Britain. Claudius exhibited no unworthy jealousy of the lieutenant; after investing him with the triumphal ornaments, the laurel crown and the *tunica palmata* and the embroidered toga, while Plautius rode on horseback through the forum to the Capitol the emperor walked on the left side of his horse.

To summon the people to the festival, heralds were sent round the town loudly proclaiming that no such a chance would ever again present itself to the mortal men of Rome, and when L. Vitellius saluted the emperor with the invocation, 'May you often repeat these celebrations!' the adulation of the flatterer provoked the laughter of the people.

A few particulars relative to these secular games—jubilee, we should now call this sort of thing—have been preserved. In the races a chariot of the white faction won, drawn by a horse named the 'Crow,' although the charioteer was flung to the ground in the arena. Also a dancer appeared on the stage, who had performed at the secular games given by Augustus sixty-three years previously. In the amphitheatre African beasts, panthers, lions, leopards, and tigers were hunted by a squadron of the body-guard under their officers. There were also bull-fights. Thessalian toreadors tormented and assailed the bulls till their strength was spent. Then they leaped on their backs, and seizing them by the horns flung the beasts down on the sand. A gladiator dressed as a shepherd, armed only with his pastoral crook and mantle, contended with a lion, and as the beast leaped upon him, he dexterously twisted the cloak round the head of the lion, cast him to the ground and knelt on his neck. A giant from Arabia, nine feet nine inches high, was exhibited, as well as a chariot drawn by four tame tigers.

But what to the two rival women, Agrippina and Messalina, was of



greatest interest was the appearance of their respective sons in the Trojan game. Britannicus was but six, and Nero was nine. They were dressed in military harness, richly gilt, and took part in a cavalcade among other noble youths, and then in a sham fight representing the conflict between the Greeks and the inhabitants of Ilium. The spectators, regardless of the danger to which they exposed the child and his mother by their factious applause, exhibited their enthusiasm for Agrippina and the grandson of Germanicus, and received the appearance in the circus of the young son of the prince with chilling indifference.

This token of popular preference would have angered Messalina and provoked her to destroy both her rival and the child, had it not been that her shallow mind was at that time fully engaged with a new amour. The object of her passion was C. Silius, on whom she heaped presents, honours, and lavished promises.

The story of the intrigue of Messalina with C. Silius that led to her death is most obscure. As given by Tacitus it is incredible, as he himself was aware, for he says, 'I am conscious that what I relate will appear fabulous, that such recklessness should have existed, but I do not dress up my narrative for producing an effect, rather I always have related and always will relate what has been stated to me, or what I have found recorded by my predecessors.'

A.U.C. 801.  
A.D. 48.  
Act. 57.

The facts were, no doubt, as Tacitus relates them, but the key to explain them was not in his hands. His account is as follows: 'Messalina now broke forth into unheard-of excesses, when Silius, whether impelled by some fatal infatuation, or judging that the dangers impending over his head were only to be averted by a bold stroke, urged "that all disguise should be flung aside in the matter, they were not driven to the necessity of waiting for the death of the prince; to the innocent deliberate plans might be harmless, but in glaring guilt safety must be sought in audacity. They were backed," he said, "by accomplices alarmed for their safety. As for himself, he was single, childless, ready to marry her and to adopt Britannicus. Messalina would secure her position and maintain it, if they anticipated any action on the part of Claudius who, as he was unguarded against the approach of stratagem, was headstrong when provoked to anger." These suggestions were but coldly received by Messalina, not out of love for her husband, but because she feared lest Silius, having gained the sovereignty, would cast her off. She, however, coveted the name of matrimony, from the greatness of the infamy attaching to such an alliance, which gives zest to those who are steeped in vice. Nor did she stay longer than till Claudius went to Ostia, to assist at a sacrifice; when she celebrated her nuptials with Silius with all the usual solemnities.'

The conduct in the matter of Silius is variously represented. According to Juvenal, a contemporary of Tacitus and Suetonius, Silius

was most reluctant to have anything to say to Messalina, and was wholly free from ambitious views. According to Suetonius, Claudius believed that 'Messalina aspired to share with Silius the imperial dignity:' about which, indeed, there can be little doubt.

The secret history of this mysterious affair would seem to be this :

Messalina from first to last had believed that in herself lay a higher right to represent the Caesars than rested in Claudius, in that two streams of the Julian blood met in her veins. She was weary and disgusted with her half-witted old husband, and she was well aware that a large party among the nobles was impatient of his rule. She was madly in love with C. Silius, consul-designate for the ensuing year, and she determined by a bold stroke to cause a revolution. Whilst her husband was from Rome, she hoped to rouse the people and the guards, place herself and Silius at their head, and put Claudius to death. But in order that this should be effected it was necessary that her lover should be united to her legally. So only could he be elevated to the throne when Claudius was cast from it.

Already, as has been pointed out, what was a new thing in Roman eyes, women of the Julian blood were assuming an independent position, and were claiming an authority apart from their husbands.

Circumstances combined in her favour in an exceptional manner. Omens and prophecies had prepared the people for a change of dynasty, or for some great crisis in the State. The dream of the knight Petra was whispered from one to another. Vintage was approaching, and with the vintage Claudius would die. Another form of the dream was also diligently circulated. Claudius had been seen in vision crowned with empty ears of corn, and this warned the Roman populace that with his continuance of reign famine would ensue. The phoenix was said to have appeared in Egypt, and its last appearance had prognosticated the death of Tiberius. Then a prophecy was brought to the notice of the emperor that before the close of the year death would strike down the husband of Messalina. In a panic of fear, he himself signed the writing of divorce, and sanctioned her marriage with C. Silius, which was to take place with all the usual and legal rites, after which he intended to put the bridegroom to death and reclaim his empress. By this means the prophecy would be fulfilled, and he himself would escape. Suetonius says, 'It is beyond all belief (yet certain) that Claudius did actually sign the writings relative to her dowry; induced to do so, it is said, by the design of averting from himself and transferring upon another the danger with which he was threatened by certain omens,' and the scholiast on Juvenal says the same thing. Such is one explanation of a very dark and mysterious transaction.

Claudius had recently been much shaken by the discovery of an assassin near his person. This man, a knight, Cn. Nonius, meditated

the murder of the prince. Some of his slaves confided the secret to L. Otho, who was out of favour at court, and might be supposed inclined to enter into the plot; but instead of so doing, he gave warning of the projected attempt, and Nonius was watched closely. The knight presented himself before Claudius to pay a morning visit, and subjected himself to the usual search. Then he was suffered to accompany the Caesar to the temple of Mars the Avenger, where the latter was about to offer a sacrifice. At this moment it was discovered that Nonius had succeeded in secreting a hunting-knife, which he had got into his hand ready wherewith to deal the fatal blow. He was at once arrested and tortured, but died without naming a confederate.

Claudius summoned the senate by heralds, and with sobs and tears complained of the dangers to which he was subjected, so that he was nowhere in security. After this incident for some time he would not appear in public. But now he went to Ostia, to inspect the basin he had contrived as a harbour, with its moles and lighthouse.

Messalina, making some excuse of ill-health, remained behind in Rome, and proceeded at once to solemnise the marriage with Silius.

But she had by this step alarmed the freedmen. Her new favourite was not a dancer nor a doctor, no insignificant personage, but young, noble, of handsome appearance, and consul-designate. Should she raise him to the throne, and that this was her intention they did not doubt for a moment, then their rule would be at an end, their power broken. Moreover, Messalina had committed the fatal error of singling out from among them Polybius, whom she suspected of being in the pay of Agrippina, and who was a friend of Seneca, and putting him to death. What had happened to Polybius might happen to them also. Callistus, Narcissus, and Pallas consulted together, and their first intention was to warn Messalina not to proceed further with her plan. Their fears, however, allowed them to come to no conclusion. Callistus, taught by experience in the household of Caligula, was for the utmost caution. Pallas was for letting matters take their course. Narcissus alone was for energetic action, action so sudden that Messalina would be quite unprepared for it.

The freedmen gained two women, Calpurnia and Cleopatra, with money and promises, to assist them in opening the eyes of Claudius to his danger. Both were drilled in their part, and when Calpurnia threw herself at the feet of Claudius with the exclamation, 'Messalina is married to Silius!' she turned to Cleopatra, who was standing near, and asked if she had heard the news. On the latter assenting, she entreated that Narcissus might be summoned. The freedman entered, and begged to be forgiven if he conveyed to the imperial ears tidings that were unfavourable; he said that hitherto he had kept silence over the intrigues of the empress with Vettius, Plautius, and others; that now he did not reproach her for her infidelity, for the presents which she had made to

Silius:—but what constrained him to speak was the danger in which Claudius stood. 'Are you not aware,' he asked, 'what has taken place? The marriage of Silius has been public, before the senate, the people, and the soldiers, and unless you act with promptness the husband of Messalina will be master of Rome.'

Then Narcissus called in the special friends of the emperor: Turpinus, the prefect charged with the oversight of the corn, and Lusius Geta, one of the two commanders of the guard, and questioned them on what had taken place. Their reply confirmed that which Claudius had been told; and they strongly urged him at once to return to Rome, take refuge in the praetorium, call on the guard to protect his person, and then proceed immediately to the arrest and chastisement of the guilty. Claudius, completely thrown off his balance by fright, consented to everything proposed. He could neither speak a consecutive sentence nor form a resolution; but he cried out to every one who entered to know whether he were still prince, and whether Silius were not at the head of the State.

The freedmen mistrusted Geta and Vitellius, whom they believed to be completely devoted to Messalina, and the feebleness of character of Claudius was so great that they could not rely on his not changing his course, should those engaged to Messalina gain his ear. They advised him that his only chance lay in transferring the command of the praetorians for a single day to one of the freedmen, and Narcissus declared himself ready to undertake the charge.

Claudius consented, and he at once sent orders to the city for the house of Silius to be surrounded and all within to be arrested. Then Narcissus, not venturing to suffer the emperor out of his influence for an hour, asked for and obtained, a place in the chariot of Claudius, as a precaution lest the companions of the emperor, Vitellius and P. Caecina Largus, should divert the current of his suspicion against himself instead of against Messalina. The conduct of these two men on the journey justified his precaution; for as Claudius on the road vibrated between alarm for himself and regret for his wife, which he exhibited by exclamations of fear or of tenderness, Vitellius would not compromise himself in any way, not feeling certain of the event, but to every ejaculation of Claudius, murmured, 'Shocking treason!' When Narcissus, moreover, pressed him to speak the truth relative to the conduct of the empress, he evasively held back, and refused to declare himself convinced of her guilt. Largus observed a like reticence, so that the whole burden of responsibility rested on Narcissus.

The road over the undulating campagna was long and dreary, first and there a bit of tufa rock cropped up out of the dingy sand, mixed with licks and laurestinus, then ensued a forest of brushwood, thick, humble and pillowy, then came long dunes roved over by slow moving oaks. Claudius was a passionate player at games of chance



and he had a contrivance in his chariot for dice-playing that the table might not jolt the cubes off as he threw them whilst travelling. But on this day the dice-box was neglected. A deeper game was in progress. Narcissus knew that life and power were at stake, and Vitellius and Largus were full of unrest for their own prospects. When Narcissus reflected on the stupidity of Claudius, says Tacitus, his blind attachment to his wife, he could not calculate but that the fatal weakness of Claudius might spoil all. Yet the passive spirit of the emperor revived his confidence. His solicitude was to prevent an interview, and to obtain the execution of Messalina before she could make her defence; Narcissus feared lest the sight of his wife, her tears, her pleading tones might again enthral the uxorious monarch, and turn his resentment against those who had denounced her.

Let us now turn to Rome, where, according to the representations of the freedmen, Messalina and Silius were preparing for a revolution.

The first step had been taken. The Caesar had himself, so we are assured, signed the contract for the payment of her marriage-portion before he left the city. The ceremony of the marriage was performed with every legal and sacred formality. The purple *Lectus genialis* was spread, the thousand times a thousand sesterces were produced, the customary sum as dower paid with a noble bride; Messalina wore the veil, symbol of a virginal bashfulness that seeks to hide its blushes—but not a flake of modest colour remained in her bold countenance.

The altars smoked with sacrifices to invoke the favour of the gods on this union; the aruspex was present to perform the religious rites, and the seven Roman citizens required by law to witness a divorce. The act of divorce was read by a freedman, and it is possible that this part may have been enacted by Mnester. Nuts were cast over the bride, and perhaps, in the wantonness of their merriment and reckless assurance, she cut apples, and tossed the pips to the ceiling, to see if they would adhere, thence to draw an omen as to their union, as in the banquet described by Horace.

The statement made by Narcissus was probably not too highly coloured, when he said that the marriage had taken place before the knights, senators, and military, for it was an essential part of the plan that it should be made as public as possible.

The month was October, the vintage moon was full, and all Rome, and indeed all Italy, was in the midst of the relaxation and frolic of the Bacchanalian orgies. Liber Pater and Libera were the patrons not of the grape and of agriculture only but of general fertility, and they were constantly regarded as special guardians of marriage. The name of Liber, or the liberator, implied the licence that was tolerated at his festival, licence of speech and of action. Songs—fescennine verses were sung at this season, and also in the nuptial procession. Priestesses, wreathed with ivy, sold cakes of flour, oil, and honey in the streets;

oblations of the must, the new-pressed wine, were poured over every altar, and at the feet of every image of the god of the Vintage.

In the gardens of the Palatine palace, Messalina and her bridegroom were keeping simultaneously the festival of the god of Licence and of their marriage. Regardless of the necessity for prompt action, overconfident in the indolence or imbecility of Claudius, doubtful lest in the riot of Bacchic orgies any serious step with the military could be taken, and knowing that till the feast was over no legal assembly of the senate could be summoned, Messalina and Silius let slip their opportunity. On the very day on which her enemies in Ostia were bringing against her the capital charge of high treason, she was giving a Bacchic entertainment. In her house she exhibited a representation of the vintage: the wine-presses were plied, the wine-vats flowed, and round them leapt women, girt with scanty fawn-skins, whilst she, as head-priestess of the orgies, with her gold-yellow<sup>1</sup> hair flowing from beneath an ivy wreath, the most beautiful woman in Rome, along with the most beautiful man, led the choral dance in high *cothurni*, he wearing the thyrsus, and tossing his head in Bacchic frenzy, whilst about them danced the tambourine players with tinkling jingles and swelling songs.

In wanton frolic, Vettius Valens, the physician, a discarded lover, climbed the tallest cypress in the garden. Some one called out to him jokingly to ask what he saw. 'A hurricane from Ostia,' he replied. Those who later recalled this incident were undecided whether he really saw a cloud on the horizon, or whether he foresaw what was coming upon that assembly of revellers.

The catastrophe was not to arrive so unexpectedly, the storm to burst so unprepared for, as the freedmen had desired. The friends of Messalina—probably Vitellius—on knowing the danger in which she stood, had sent messengers post haste to Rome, and tidings came to the half-tipsy revellers 'that Claudius was apprised of all, and was on his way to the capital, bent on immediate vengeance.' The company, sobered by their fears, dispersed in all directions, but many of them, in their attempt to escape, fell into the hands of the centurions who, with companies of guards, were marching to the palace.

Messalina and Silius separated, and whilst the latter 'to dissemble his fear resumed the offices of the forum,' she fled to the gardens of Lucullus on the Pincian Hill, that she, as a second Jezebel, had obtained by the sacrifice of Asiaticus on false evidence.

The blow had fallen so suddenly and with such numbing effect, that at the first moment Messalina knew not what to do, but her womanly instinct prompted her on consideration to meet Claudius before he reached the city, and if her wonted power of fascination failed, to present her children to him and obtain pardon through his parental affection for them.

<sup>1</sup> Juvenal, *Sat.* vi. 120, *flavum crinem*—.

She hastily summoned the pedagogue and nurse of Britannicus and Octavia, and bade them attend her on the road to Ostia. Then she hurried to the vestal college and implored the head of the virgins, named Vibidia, to associate herself with her in soliciting the forgiveness of Claudius. On foot, attended by three persons only—so suddenly had her whole train melted away—she traversed the streets. She passed the great racecourse on her right, was soon without the walls, went hard by the pyramid of Cestius, and the great heap of broken pitchers thrown away by the unloading boats that brought wine to the city. The sherds were spread over the soil to the very roadway. Then her strength failed her, she could walk no further. A lumbering muck-cart came by, bouncing on the basaltic pavement, and Messalina entreated to be lifted into it. So the proud woman, the first to be entitled to ride in the gilded carpentum in triumph through the forum, went crouching, pale and shivering with fear, in a dung-cart to meet her husband. The passers-by turned and looked with wonder at her, but ‘pitied her not,’ says Tacitus, ‘as the deformity of her crimes overpowered every feeling of compassion.’

She had not far to go. The imperial outriders came clattering by, and in the distance could be seen the chariot of Claudius approaching. Messalina descended from the cart, and stood in the way with hands extended in entreaty.

But the keen eye of Narcissus had recognised her, and he knew that the decisive moment had come. Drawing closer to the emperor, he endeavoured to screen the distressed woman from his eyes by thrusting under them a paper on which was drawn out a catalogue of her crimes; and when, with piercing cry, Messalina entreated Claudius to listen to the mother of Octavia and Britannicus, the freedman called in his ear, ‘Silius—marriage!’

The charioteer drove on. A little way further, at the city gate, the vestal virgin stood forward with the two children, sobbing and frightened. Vibidia, exercising the privilege of her office, demanded that the wife should not be condemned without her defence being heard. Narcissus waved her out of the road, but the woman refused to move till the prince had given the requisite promise. Then, bidding her go and mind the sacred fire, the freedman urged the chariot forward.

Claudius, bewildered, remained inert, a mere tool in the hands of the freedman. He suffered Narcissus to deliver all orders; he was led to the house of Silius and shown furniture and ornaments from the imperial palace that Messalina had sent to her lover, heirlooms of the family to which he belonged, to touch which was beyond her right. In the vestibule was the statue of Silius the elder, that by order of the senate should have been destroyed some time ago. With all the exactness of a Cicerone, Narcissus showed each article in the house that could rouse the indignation of the bewildered prince; and then he con-

veyed the emperor to the Praetorium, where the guards had been assembled to receive him and testify their fidelity. By the advice of his energetic prompter, Claudius made a speech to the soldiery; in his nervous terror it was but poor stuff, and the only sentence in it that could be recalled was a declaration 'that as he had met with no happiness in marriage, he would remain for the future without a wife, and he begged the soldiers to put him summarily to death should he forget his undertaking.'

The soldiers, without understanding all the circumstances, loudly cried out for the names of the guilty persons, that they might deal vengeance upon them.

Claudius ascended the tribunal, and those who had been arrested were brought before him. First came Silius. He declined to defend himself, and asked for a speedy death. He was executed forthwith, together with the knights M. Helvius (Trogus?), Cotta, and Fabius, who met their death with dignity. Then came Titius Proculus, assigned by Silius as guard to Messalina; he offered to turn evidence against the others, but in vain. Vettius Valens, the physician, acknowledged his guilt; then followed the rest of the witnesses who had attested the divorce and re-marriage. Next came the turn of Mnester. In vain did he strip his shoulder to show the scars of the lashes he had received from Messalina, evidences that she treated and despised him as a slave, though retaining him in her court, that she might engross to herself his pantomimic services. But the worst interpretation was put on his conduct; Mnester was represented as having danced underfoot the imperial honour, and he was hurried away to execution. A youth of family, named Montanus, was included in the proscription, for no other crime than that of having for a single day found favour in the eyes of the adulteress. Plautius Lateranus was degraded from his position as senator, but was granted his life for the sake of his uncle, Aulus Plautius.

The trials over, Claudius returned to his palace. He was hungry after his long drive, and called for food, as he seated himself at table.

In the meanwhile Messalina had returned to the garden of Lucullus, where are now the shady walks of the villa Medici, built up on the massive walls above the natural fosse or valley beyond which rise the gardens of the Borghese Villa. Disappointed in her first attempt to reach and turn Claudius, she swayed between hopes and despair. She framed speeches of the most moving character that she would address to Claudius, she tortured her mind to find excuses for her conduct; then the old pride of the empress awoke in her, and she poured forth a torrent of threats against her enemies, in whose net she lay entangled, and over whom she felt sure she would triumph if she obtained that interview with her husband which had been assured her at the intercession of the vestal high priestess. But Narcissus did not disguise from himself that the danger was imminent so long as she lived.



The emperor was at table ; his terrors abated under the influence of good food and good wine ; his excited nerves relaxed, and his severity dissolved with his fears. He turned to his attendants and gave orders 'to go and inform the unhappy woman that he would hear her plead her cause on the morrow.'

Narcissus at once saw that his resentment was yielding, and that his wonted affection was returning. Instantly rising from table he rushed forth, found the tribune and centurions then on guard, and bade



FIG. 99.—DOMITIA LEPIDA (?). Bust, Mus. Tor., No. 527.

them 'precipitate the execution, for such,' said he, 'was the emperor's command.' With them he sent the freedman Euodus to see that his orders were strictly fulfilled.

The wretched woman, exhausted with the frightful tension of the day, was lying by lamplight in an arbour, at the feet of her mother, who was seated. Domitia Lepida had not been on the best of terms with Messalina, her daughter. Perhaps she resented the murder of her

husband by the orders of her daughter. But now, in the hour of desperation and desolation, the mother came to the assistance of her abandoned child. She, older and more experienced than her daughter, was buoyed up by no vain hopes. She saw, what Messalina did not, that the only thing to be asked for was a painless death. Thus she addressed the exhausted, prostrate woman at her feet, and, as a Roman matron of the olden time, exhorted her to forestall the hand of the executioner.

But Messalina was young, she clung to life with desperation, she shrank with horror from the prospect of death; and her spirit, worn out with a vicissitude of extremities of emotion, lacked the energy and strength to nerve her to suicide. Moreover, she could not abandon the hope of escape that still gleamed before her. Weeping she threw her arms about her mother, and laid her head on her lap bewailing her fate. Then the hearts of both stood still for a moment, as they heard the thunder of blows at the door of the deserted, empty house resound through the stillness of the night. The murderers had come, and bursting in the gates they appeared before the fallen empress. The soldiers halted, and in dead silence the tribune approached to communicate to Messalina the order for her execution. The chamberlain Euodus leaped forward to pour out upon the wretched woman a torrent of vulgar abuse.

Now only did the last spark of hope expire in the breast of Messalina, and she put out her hand for the dagger offered her by her mother. But the blows she dealt herself in throat and bosom were with a trembling hand, and scratched the skin only. Then the tribune of the guard in pity ran her through with his short sword.

The body of the empress was granted to her mother, that she might attend to its burial. A few moments later the two children arrived. They had been hurriedly sent for. They found their mother lying in her blood. Octavia never forgot the horrors of that night that left her an orphan.

Claudius was still at table, when the servant whom he had sent to tell the empress he would receive her on the morrow returned with the tidings 'that Messalina was no more.' The particulars were withheld, and he asked no questions. He was left to suppose that she had put herself to death. The day after, when he seated himself at supper, it was said that he asked 'Why the empress did not appear?' After that he ceased to mention her; he made no remark when he saw his children in mourning, nor when he saw that her statues in public places had been thrown down and broken. Men thought this a token of his crass stupidity and want of feeling; but it may have been that he felt his loss, his disappointment too deeply to care to give it expression. The senate, in its exultation at relief from a danger, granted to Narcissus the insignia of a quaestor.

‘Whatever the crimes of the miserable woman may have been,’ says Dean Merivale—‘and the stain of wantonness as well as of cruelty, so often in her station allied to it, is indelibly attached to her name—there seems reason to surmise that her enormities have been exaggerated by sinister influence.’

‘In historic matters of this sort,’ says Stahr, ‘there is a silence more eloquent than detailed accounts. It seems to me that we have such a case here. When Seneca says naught in his works concerning Agrippina, it is intelligible, for he found it expedient not to mention her. But it is more hard to explain his absolute reticence relative to her antagonist. I do not believe I am wrong in giving a motive that does him credit. Assuredly he was well acquainted with the things told of the late empress after her fall ; but precisely because he knew from what spring they issued, and what passion was active in enhancing the dark colours wherewith her portrait was painted, his sense of justice withheld him from giving weight to charges which he knew to be in part false, and all exaggerated by deadly hate ; he refused to lend to them the authority of his name. Writers of a later period had not, and could not have these scruples. They followed, in more or less good faith, the report and traditions which reached them, even in their most improbable, incredible, and even impossible forms.’

VII.—AGRIPPINA EMPRESS.

No historian so much as hints that Agrippina was in any way engaged in the events connected with the fall of her enemy Messalina, and indeed intervention on her part would have availed nothing ; the infatuated woman, her rival, precipitated herself into destruction without the necessity of a hand being extended to give her a final thrust. But that Agrippina was kept fully informed of all that took place cannot be doubted ; Pallas was in her

A. U.C. 801.  
A.D. 48.  
Aet. 57.

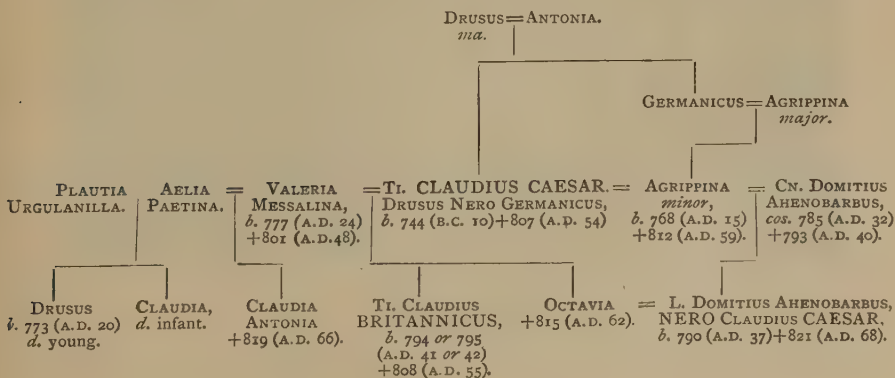




FIG. 100.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Statue in the Lateran, found at Cervetri.



pay, it was however Narcissus and not Pallas who by his energy and inflexibility of purpose accomplished the overthrow of Messalina. But for his determined conduct and the delay of Silius in securing the co-operation of the guards, the revolution would have been accomplished and Claudius dethroned and murdered.

No sooner had Messalina disappeared from the scene than the combination against her dissolved. The freedmen, knowing the helpless character of the emperor, and the certainty that he would fall under the domination of a woman in spite of his protest that he would never marry again, cast about for a wife to take the place left vacant at his side; and each of the three ministers had his own candidate for the place, by means of whom he hoped to obtain supremacy over the other two.

Narcissus stood prominent at the moment. The destruction of Messalina was his work. He alone had planned and carried out the counterstroke which had cost Messalina her life, whereas his confederates had hesitated and been unable or unwilling to take bold action. He felt that he was master of the situation, not because the senate, in acknowledgment of his services, had conferred on him the insignia of a quaestor,—the haughty freedman appreciated the real power in his hands that he possessed and exercised, and despised these honourable badges as child's toys—but because he believed that he held the frightened and muddleheaded emperor in the hollow of his hand to mould to what he chose. He had resolved to replace Messalina by Aelia Paetina, the former wife of Claudius, mother of Antonia, a woman whom he had divorced on the most trivial grounds. Aelia was well acquainted with the habits of Claudius, and the children of Messalina had nothing to fear from her. Callistus on the other hand favoured Lolliia Paulina, daughter of the consular, M. Lollius, one who for a brief period had been the wife of Caligula. She was the granddaughter of the far more illustrious M. Lollius, and the heiress of his immense wealth, the spoil of the provinces he had governed and pillaged. Pliny describes to us the jewelry of pearls and emeralds she wore at an ordinary betrothal festival, in her hair, round her neck, arms, and fingers, as worth fifty million sesterces (£380,000).<sup>1</sup> She had been married to C. Memmius Regulus, but on the report of her grandmother's beauty, Caius had sent for her, divorced her from her husband, and married her, but soon divorced her again. Against Aelia Paetina, Callistus urged 'the length of time that had elapsed since Claudius and she had been married, and the fact of the former divorce having left a blot on the name of Aelia, also the presumption that her restoration to her former place as his wife would make her proud.' Moreover, Aelia would be interested in advancing her own daughter at the expense of the children of Messalina, whereas Lolliia had no

<sup>1</sup> And this, says Pliny, was by no means her most valuable set of jewelry, such as was worn on great occasions.

children by her former marriages, and would therefore have no interest opposed to her step-children, were she to become empress.

Pallas, however, proposed Agrippina.

The position of affairs was not very unlike that in which Tiberius and the elder Agrippina had stood, uncle and niece, each representing a rival family. Then the mother of the present Agrippina had maintained a jealous resentful attitude towards her uncle, which had involved herself and her children in misery, and caused the death of several of them. Now, once again, uncle and niece stood over against each other, and till this moment the life and fortunes of Agrippina and her son had been in daily, hourly danger, menaced not by a Sejanus, but by Messalina. The younger Agrippina had learned prudence by her mother's mistake. She must seize the opportunity that now offered, and secure her position. She knew for a certainty, as a something about which she could make no mistake, that whosoever succeeded Messalina, whether Aelia or Lollia, or any other noble and ambitious woman, the new empress would use her acquired power to effect the removal of the only woman of commanding influence and rival importance to herself. The death of Messalina relieved Agrippina of peril for a moment only. No choice remained to her but to step into the place of Messalina, or perish along with her son by the sword of the executioner, or the poison of a Locusta.

Pallas could put his case plausibly before Claudius. He represented to him the advisability of reuniting the separated streams of the sacred Julian blood. 'She would bring with her,' said he, 'the grandson of Germanicus, who was in every respect worthy of the imperial fortune: himself of noble descent, and a fit bond of union to the posterity of the Claudian family; she, moreover, had shown herself to be fruitful, was still in the freshness of youth, and should not be suffered to transfer the splendour of the Caesars to another house.'

This last consideration was calculated to throw weight into the scale, as it suggested to Claudius an alternative of political danger. But Agrippina was her best advocate. She had held aloof from the palace as long as Messalina was there, lest she should arouse her jealousy and bring down on herself the sword dangling over her head; but now that this fear was gone, she was free to work on Claudius, and her masterful spirit soon completely enthralled that of her weak and vacillating uncle.

She urged the advisability of a marriage between Octavia, the emperor's daughter by Messalina, and her own son Lucius Domitius, known afterwards by the name of Nero. It was true that Octavia was betrothed to Lucius Silanus, who had engaged the favour of Claudius, so that he had conferred on him the triumphal ornaments; but on the other hand, he was rightly or wrongly represented as a youth of infamous morals, and Claudius, anxious for the happiness of his

daughter, was ready to dissolve the contract when this was represented to him.<sup>1</sup> L. Vitellius, who had been the ready servant to Messalina, was as obsequious to Agrippina. He brought a formal accusation against Silanus, and as he was censor, degraded the young man from his praetorship and expelled him from the senate. This was executed with great severity. One day alone remained before the expiration of the term of office of praetorship, yet Silanus was degraded for that day and a substitute for one day appointed.

It will not be amiss here briefly to recapitulate the chief events in the life of Agrippina up to this point, so as to refresh the memory of the reader; for from this moment the fortunes of the world for nearly twenty years remained in the hands of herself and her son.

Agrippina was born A.D. 15 in the capital of the Ubii, on the left bank of the Rhine, the place that afterwards bore her name, Colonia Agrippina, the modern Cologne. She was three years old when she lost her father, Germanicus. She was twelve when her mother was banished, and seventeen when she lost her by death. After the banishment of her mother, the elder Agrippina, she and her sisters, Drusilla and Julia, and her brother Caius, four years older than herself, were brought up in the house of their grandmother, Antonia. She was married on January 1, A.D. 29, when aged thirteen, to Cnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus. Suetonius has painted his character in the blackest colours, and tells of him several horrible stories. 'During his attendance on Caius Caesar in the East, he killed a freedman of his own for refusing to drink as much as he ordered him. Being dismissed for this from Caesar's society, he did not mend his manners; for, in a village on the Appian road, he suddenly whipped his horses, and drove his chariot on purpose over a poor boy, crushing him to pieces.' It is easy to see how an accident could be magnified by popular hostility of feeling into an act of wilful brutality. Suetonius pretends to see into the heart of Domitius, who lived some seventy years before his time, and is able to state positively that he drove over the child in the road 'on purpose.' On the other hand Tacitus speaks of him as a good and able soldier; and Velleius Paterculus, a contemporary, speaks of him as 'a youth of most remarkable goodness of disposition.' Had he been the man represented by Suetonius, we may feel assured that Tiberius would never have given Agrippina to him.

In A.D. 32, Cn. Domitius was appointed consul, and after that acted as proconsul and governor of Sicily. In A.D. 36, he was nominated by Tiberius along with his two brothers-in-law, member of a commission to inquire into the distress caused by a great fire in Rome, and to relieve it. He survived Tiberius by three years, though accused of treason just before the death of this emperor. He was saved by the

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus says he was 'unguarded' and not really guilty of the charge brought against him. The accusation was trumped up against him for her own purposes by Agrippina.

decease of Tiberius, and the accession of his brother-in-law, Caius. Such accusations were too rife and reckless to be accepted as well-grounded without evidence.

In A.D. 40, Domitius died of dropsy at Pyrgi, an Etruscan city (the present San Severo), one of the few members of the imperial house who died a natural death.

Lucius Domitius (Nero) was born on the 15th December, A.D. 37, when Agrippina was aged twenty-one, born exactly nine months after the death of Tiberius and the release of her husband from prison, and he was the only child of that marriage. The story told by Suetonius, that when the babe was shown to its father, Cnaeus said, 'Nothing but what is detestable and pernicious to the public can spring from me and Agrippina,' is obviously an invention of the time of Nero.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Agrippina related that as the child was born the rays of the rising December sun smote on and illumined him, a sure token of his future glory. It was related—naturally in later times—that when the astrologer Thrasybulus was asked for the presage given by the stars relative to the babe, he answered that he would indeed reign, but would be the death of his own mother, whereupon Agrippina proudly exclaimed, 'Then may he reign and I perish.'

This child was thenceforth the focus of her ambition, the centre of her thoughts; for him she schemed and battled, for him remained tranquil when the storm swept over her head that carried away her sister.

By law one-third of the estates of his father fell to the youthful Nero, aged but three when Cnaeus Domitius died, but Caius who inherited the rest seized on this portion also, and the bereaved child, whose father was dead and whose mother was an exile, was taken care of by his aunt, Lepida. Under her charge he was given over to a dancer and a barber as his pedagogues; but on the accession of Claudius, his father's patrimony was restored to him, and his mother was recalled from banishment. Of the peril in which she stood, and of her caution during the period when Messalina was in the plenitude of her power, and like a female Phaethon was driving the chariot of the sun, enough has been said.

Probably at this time, when Agrippina was resolved on becoming empress, as the only alternative to death, she published her Memoirs, to engage popular sympathy for herself and her son. In it she mentioned the birth of Nero, and in it was probably told the story of a certain mythical prodigy that had grown out of a small natural occurrence. One day a snake's skin was found on the boy's bed, and this Agrippina had enclosed in a bracelet of gold which Nero wore thenceforth on his arm. But this simple incident was exaggerated into something very different. It was told that Messalina had commissioned assassins to enter the bedroom of the child and strangle

<sup>1</sup> 'The extravagance of this assertion is its own condemnation.'—STAHR.



him whilst he slept. But on their appearance a serpent had darted from under his pillow, and they were so frightened that they ran away.

It is also probable that in this book were heaped up all the stories against Messalina that floated on the surface of popular talk at the time, and were there fixed to deepen the popular hatred of the fallen empress; it is not unlikely that they bore as close an alliance to facts as does the tale of the serpent defending the sleeping Nero to the real circumstance.

At the opening of the year 49 nothing was talked about in the capital but the question of the emperor's marriage. According to religious and popular prejudice the marriage of an uncle with his niece was regarded as incestuous and certain to bring down the wrath of the gods on those who contracted such an union and on the nation which tolerated it. Claudius shared these views, he was strict in his adherence to a traditional code of morals, and it would appear that he contemplated the adoption of Agrippina as an alternative, for he repeatedly spoke of her in public at this period as his 'daughter and ward, nursed and brought up in his arms.' There were difficulties in every way, and in his confused mind he did not see how to escape them.

A.U.C. 802.

A.D. 49.

Act. 58.

In the first place there was Lucius Domitius (Nero), the son of Agrippina, and grandson of Germanicus, who undoubtedly represented the Julian family far more nearly than himself and his own son, Britannicus; for Nero's grandmother was the daughter of Julia, the only child of Octavius. He could not conceal from himself that the true representative of the Caesars, and proper successor to the throne, in the eyes of the people, was Nero. Tiberius had been suffered to usurp the throne, and he himself had been thrust into it, as stop-gaps, because there was at the time of their several accessions no member of the Octavian house capable of reigning. He cannot have doubted that Nero would succeed him, and that his only security in that event for the safety of his own son, Britannicus, was to attach him to the son of Agrippina, and to place him conspicuously in the second place. That Britannicus should be his own successor he at this time did not suppose, however much he may have desired it. He could secure the succession to him only by the murder of Nero, and he was not so unscrupulous as to commit this crime. If Nero was to live, he must do something to provide for the safety of his own son.

Whilst Claudius was turning over his difficulties in his perplexed mind, now meditating the adoption of Agrippina as his daughter, then her elevation to be his wife, L. Vitellius, the tool of Agrippina as before of Messalina, stepped forward to cut short his hesitation, by asking him whether he were prepared to submit to the will of the people and senate. The answer of Claudius was characteristic; he said that he himself was but the first among the citizens and must therefore

obey their will. Thereupon Vitellius hastened to the Comitia, where the senate was assembled, and asked leave to address it on a matter of State importance. Leave having been granted he addressed them in a speech preserved by Tacitus. He began by saying 'That the overpowering labours of the prince, in governing the world, called for support and assistance, in order that, relieved from domestic cares, he might attend to the interests of the public. Moreover, what more honourable alleviation of the cares which oppress a ruler's mind than to take a wife who might share his good fortune and distresses, to whom he might commit his most secret thoughts and the care of his little ones, unhabituated as he was to luxury and voluptuousness, but accustomed to yield obedience to the laws from his earliest years.'

After this preamble, Vitellius paid some compliments to the senate, and then proceeded:—'That seeing they were all of one mind that the prince should marry, it became necessary that a lady should be selected who was distinguished by family, the fertility of her womb, and her unblemished purity of morals. Nor had they long to search before they would find that Agrippina stood pre-eminent for the splendour of her lineage; had given proof of her fruitfulness; and came up to their requirements in virtue. It was,' he said, 'a singularly happy circumstance that, through the providence of the gods, she was a widow, and might be united to a prince who never ranged in his fancies beyond his own wives.<sup>1</sup> They had heard from their fathers, nay, themselves had seen, wives snatched from their husbands by the lawless caprice of the Caesars; a thing never done by the sobriety of the present ruler. He hoped that a precedent might now be made for the guidance of emperors in selecting their wives. To the Romans it was an innovation on old established custom for a man to marry the daughter of his brother. The union of first cousins was also long unknown, yet was in time allowed. And this very novelty now proposed would in time be followed and practised.'

It is perhaps permissible to read between the lines of this speech,—to follow the thoughts of those who heard it during its delivery. The senate were impatient of the régime of freedmen. If Claudius were to marry, there might ensue a repetition of the same perils as had hung over and carried off so many in the senate when Messalina and they were in full accord. It were better that Claudius should be given a wife of commanding abilities, one who would act with independence, and would rule, and not be ruled by, ministers whose backs were scarred with lashes. They were heartily disgusted with the licentiousness of Messalina, which had brought the throne into disrepute, and they

<sup>1</sup> This public and bold assertion of the moral purity of both Claudius and Agrippina goes some way towards discrediting the gossiping scandal of Suetonius relative to both. It will be seen that the speaker laid stress on the virtue of Agrippina as well known, and therefore justifying the choice.

desired that the chief woman in the State should be one of approved and acknowledged virtue.

Moreover, they knew that were any one else admitted to be the consort of the prince and the keeper of his mind and conscience, there would be two parties in Rome waging internecine war, that of the new empress and that of Agrippina; in other words, those of Britannicus and of Nero. Every consideration urged the solution of the difficulty proposed by Vitellius; and with one consent the senate approved his



FIG. 101.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Profile of the Head of the Statue in the Lateran, found at Cervetri.

motion; many of the senators rushed off at once to the palace, and a crowd of the people collected, perhaps designedly by Vitellius, assembled under the Palatine and shouted at the top of their voices that it was the will of the people that Agrippina should be empress. The senate passed a decree legalising for ever marriages between uncles and their nieces; and Claudius allowed himself to yield to the judgment of the senate and people.

On the day of the public marriage, which took place two days later, two persons only were found to follow the example of the Caesar, a freedman, and a knight, and both together with their brides were invited to attend the marriage banquet of Claudius. Hardly three months had passed since the death of Messalina. At this time Agrippina was aged thirty-three, being twenty-five years younger than her husband.

From this time Rome learned what it was to be under the rule of a woman, as it had never been before, and was never to be again.

Agrippina was not such as Messalina, who was absolutely without dignity, and who, though jealous, was devoid of pride. Nor did she, as Tacitus says, 'like Messalina, mock and trample on the interests of the State in the extravagance of her lewdness.' She speedily acquired absolute control over the feeble mind and will of Claudius, and though, as a woman, she exercised her power to make reprisals on private enemies, yet in the conduct of public business she directed the affairs of State with prudence and with justice. 'The despotism exercised was as strict as though it were that of a man. In her public conduct, she was grave and rigid, frequently haughty and overbearing; no departure from chastity was observable in her home, unless it were necessary to support her power; while an insatiable thirst for money was veiled under the pretext of its use for maintaining the imperial authority.'

The innuendo on her purity we may put aside. It was inconceivable to the prurient Roman mind that Agrippina could have gained the energetic support of Pallas at any other price than her honour, whereas it is certain that her interest would secure her from following the foul traces of Messalina, that her intense pride would never suffer her to stoop to a freedman, and that her extreme caution would guard her against giving her enemies a handle against her. By the publication of her Memoirs she set up her mother as the type of a pure Roman matron, and beside this as a foil the figure of Messalina, purposely dyed to extravagant blackness. Her aim was to exhibit herself as like her mother in the whiteness of her purity.

From this time we encounter the first beginnings of court ceremonial. All such persons as were esteemed fitting persons for admission into the presence of the prince were expected to wear his image in gold on their rings. The emperor himself wore emerald or sardonyx rings. It became customary to seal, not with gems, but with gold.

The senate accorded to Agrippina, 'the daughter, mother, sister, and wife of an emperor,' every possible honour. She was granted the right, previously accorded to Messalina, to ride in the *Carpentum*, the gilded chariot, and enter into the precincts of the Capitol.

Agrippina was a stately woman, past the bloom of beauty, but still noble in appearance. She had two canine teeth on the right side of



her mouth, a token, it was supposed, of a brilliant career. She was fond of birds, and had a tame white nightingale that cost six thousand sesterces; bought at this price and presented to her. She had also a thrush that could speak, and the young Caesars, Nero and Britannicus, cultivated a talking starling that could say words in Greek as well as in Latin. Every day, says Pliny, they devoted time to teaching these birds so that they were able to pronounce whole sentences as well as single words.

We are happily able to form an opinion on good grounds of the personal appearance of Agrippina, for a beautiful statue of her as a priestess, in almost perfect condition, was found at Cervetri, along with an inscription that leaves no doubt as to the personage intended.<sup>1</sup> This splendid statue is now in the Lateran Museum. (Figs. 100, 101.)

The brow is low, but covered with hair drawn down over it, the eyebrows are lightly arched. The face, for a Roman, is unusually long, a long nose, and a long chin. The head is well shaped, like her mother's. When I showed photographs of this statue to Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor, the exclamation that escaped him was, 'What a lady, what a true and royal lady!' And that is the impression the pure, proud, and refined face makes on all attentive students. The portrait of her as Hygieia tells the same story.

In the Louvre is another portrait, a bust of certainly the same person, though the chin is not so long; it is not a good bust.

In the Chiaramonti gallery is a third, also a bust, No. 608 (Fig. 104), a very fine portrait, which struck me, passing repeatedly from one to the other, as having in it a marked family resemblance to the bust of Agrippina the Elder, No. 369. This is not so observable in the engraving. The brow is low, it retreats somewhat, but is broad. The expression is somewhat hard.

A beautiful diademed head at Munich, No. 52, there catalogued as Messalina, is probably also Agrippina the Younger, so also possibly the statue there with one hand folded in drapery and the other extended, No. 51 (Fig. 94). It is catalogued as Agrippina the Elder, wrongly. None of these, however, are to be pronounced to be Agrippina the Younger with the same confidence as is the Cervetri statue; and their resemblance (excepting the Louvre bust) is not very determinable.

The statue of Hygieia, in the Chiaramonti Gallery (Fig. 102), over against the entrance to the Braccio Nuovo, has on it a head not properly belonging to it, of a different marble. That head certainly represents the same person as the Cervetri statue in the Lateran. We shall consider the other busts later.

<sup>1</sup> IVLIAE • AVGVSTAE • GERMANICI • CAESARIS (*filiae*) AGRIPPINAE.  
The attitude recalls the lines of Virgil (*Aen.* iv. 60):

'Ipsa tenens dextra pateram pulcherrima Dido  
Candentis vaccae media inter cornua fundit,'

though in the statue the left hand holds the patera.

## VIII.—NERO AND BRITANNICUS.

FOR five years and a half, the reins of government were in the hands of Agrippina, and all her efforts were directed towards securing the succession for her son Nero. . Britannicus was not, and never had been regarded as, the rightful heir to the throne. Not only was Nero a far more direct descendant of the founder of the imperial power, but he was also older than Britannicus, and it had been the principle followed by Tiberius to let the elder succeed.

A. U. C. 802-3.

A. D. 49-50.

Aet. 58-59.



FIG. 102.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Profile of the Head of the Statue as Hygieia, in the Vatican (after Bernoulli).

The conditions now were precisely analogous to those at the close of the reign of Tiberius. Then there were two princes, Caius, of direct Octavian descent, the son of Agrippina the elder; and his own grandson, Gemellus, a few years younger than Caius, who had no drop of Octavian blood in him. Tiberius therefore nominated Caius as his successor, and passed over his grandson. Now there were again two princes before the public, one the grandchild of Agrippina, and directly representing the

Octavian line, as far as it could be represented through females ; and Britannicus, son of Claudius, connected through himself and his mother, with Octavia, the sister of Augustus. The mother of Claudius was Antonia, daughter of Octavia. Such a descent could not weigh with the people against the descent from Octavius himself.

And now that Agrippina was empress, and Nero was both adopted by Claudius, and betrothed by him to his own daughter Octavia, Britannicus passed into the background. The old emperor, as we shall see, suffered Nero to assume the manly toga before the legal period, so that he might at once enter on the official career.

Britannicus was subject to epileptic fits. His father was scrofulous ; his mother, if we may trust her bust at Florence, was of unsound constitution ; Britannicus not only had frequent fits, but his mind was, as is usual in such cases, debilitated by them.<sup>1</sup> At this time Agrippina had no reason to fear the rival claims of Britannicus, neither his father nor he urged them. The superior right of Nero was acknowledged universally.

Owing to his altered health, Britannicus was given other attendants than those he had before ; one of those now removed, Sosibius, was an infamous creature, who had been Messalina's agent in compassing the death of Valerius Asiaticus. He was sentenced to death, on what charge we do not know.<sup>2</sup> This is represented by Tacitus as the doing of Agrippina, in order to place the son of Claudius in the hands of creatures of her own. But he admits that possibly the unfortunate boy was affected with his father's infirmity. He says that it was reported that 'he was not deficient in quickness of understanding ; but whether it was really so, or whether he was given credit for it without having afforded any proof that he had wits, because folks pitied his hard fortune,' it was not possible for him to say.

Claudius made a point of having his children about him at meals, and he can hardly have failed to see what the real condition of his son was. There were quarrels between the boys, and Britannicus was insolent to his stepmother. 'He ridiculed her officious attentions,' says Tacitus, and Suetonius says that when Britannicus called Nero 'Brazenbeard' after his adoption, the elder boy flew into a passion and called him a 'changeling.' Late authorities, such as Dio and Zonaras, misunderstood the position of the two boys with relation to the succession, and supposed that the setting back of Britannicus was done by Agrippina in order to force into notice her own child, who had less claims than the other. But neither the people of Rome, nor the senate, nor Claudius himself, had any doubt whatever as to which was

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus pretends that Agrippina so represented him, but that he was not really so. It would be astonishing if he were otherwise, the offspring of a father who had been paralysed when young, and of a deformed mother.

<sup>2</sup> Dio says that he was charged with attempting to murder Nero.

crown prince, and as crown prince Nero was honoured from the first, and acknowledged by the emperor.

At the same time that Agrippina removed from Britannicus the injudicious, if not vicious, attendants given him by Messalina, she hastened to give to her own son the best possible instructor and guide she could find.

This was Seneca, who had spent eight years in exile in Corsica. He had shown his stoic philosophy with ostentation in banishment, yet he had condescended to the basest flattery of Messalina and the freedmen, in the hopes of obtaining his recall. There was no man who stood in higher repute at the time. Nero had been neglected and left to unworthy servants when in the house of his aunt Lepida, a neglect and disregard of a duty Agrippina never forgot or forgave. When she removed him from his aunt's house, on her own recall from exile, she gave him as tutors Burrhus, a worthy, honourable man, and Anicetus, an ingenious mechanician, but one who proved unprincipled, and was dismissed by Agrippina, against whom, accordingly, he bore undying resentment.

To these men she associated—or rather placed over them—M. Annaeus Seneca, now recalled and reinstated in his property, and invested with the praetorian rank. But Seneca, though he could not decline the office of tutor, accepted it with repugnance. He soon perceived that the boy was wanting in moral character, that his intellect was of a low order, and that he was of uncontrollable temper, which he had never been taught to hold in restraint. On the very first night in which he entered on his duties, he dreamed that he was appointed tutor to Caligula, and he speedily assured himself that his pupil was, as he confided to his intimate friends, an untamed lion, whose savagery would break forth as soon as he had tasted blood.

It was at this time, and in allusion to his undertaking, that Seneca wrote his work *On Anger*. In it he speaks of the fair and red complexions—and Nero was fair—as being specially prone to anger, and he gives instructions how a youth of this character should be trained. 'He is to be permitted relaxation, but not suffered to lapse into laziness and give himself up to amusement; for an only son who is much considered and denied nothing, whose tears the ever-anxious mother wipes away, if he complains of his teacher, and if his complaints are attended to, then he is injured thereby in his inmost soul, and will never be able to endure opposition.' The reference to Nero and Agrippina is obvious enough.

The betrothal of Nero to Octavia, which now took place, exhibited the pedantic adhesion of Claudius to forms which had lost their significance. Nero, by adoption, was now his son, and therefore brother to Octavia, accordingly legal impediments stood in the way of their marriage; this was got over by Claudius having his daughter adopted into another family.

Secure though we might suppose the position of Agrippina to have



been, she did not feel that it was so. She was suspicious of Lollia Paulina, the candidate proposed as a wife for Claudius by Callistus; from her enormous wealth—perhaps from her beauty also—Agrippina feared that a cabal might be formed to bring her into favour with Claudius, rouse his conscientious scruples as to his union with his niece, obtain a divorce, and the installation of Lollia in her room. That there were grounds for such a suspicion we may suppose, for Agrippina was hardly one unnecessarily to provoke alarm by high-handed dealings. Lollia was accused of having consulted magicians and astrologers, and of having sent to the oracle of the Clarian Apollo relative to the marriage of Claudius with Agrippina, to ascertain whether it was likely to last long, and whether it were an offence in the eyes of the gods. That she did this is probable enough, and the use she might have made of oracle and prophecy would have seriously affected the opinion of the people of Rome towards the empress. Claudius himself addressed the senate against her; he spoke of her nobility of blood and position, purposely avoiding reference to her brief union with Caligula; he stated that she had been engaged in treasonable plots, and that he desired her banishment from Italy, and the confiscation of a portion of her goods. Accordingly she went into exile; but Agrippina was not satisfied; she sent a tribune after her to put her to death, and bade him bring to her the head of her rival, that she might be certain that Lollia Paulina was dead.

When the head was brought to Agrippina, says Dio—who, be it remembered, wrote 180 years after—as she could not recognise it, she opened the mouth with her own hand to examine the teeth, and assure herself of the identity by their peculiar formation.<sup>1</sup> Tacitus says nothing of this; he tells us that Lollia Paulina was constrained by a soldier to commit suicide, and Suetonius says nothing about it at all. We are certainly not justified in accepting the horrible story of Dio. It is possible that Lollia may have committed suicide of her own accord when conducted by the soldiers in charge of her to the destined place of banishment. It seems improbable that a soldier should commit a crime except under signed orders from his commanding officer or the emperor.

Tacitus tells us that another illustrious lady, Calpurnia—he does not say what further name she bore—was banished by Agrippina; and that she was afterwards recalled by Nero. The reason for her banishment was, says Tacitus, ‘that the prince had praised her beauty in casual discourse.’<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It was Agrippina who had the peculiarity in her teeth. Dio has transferred the peculiarity to Lollia.

<sup>2</sup> Calpurnia was the name of one of the two women who had informed Claudius of the marriage of Messalina. It is certainly singular, if the Calpurnia who was banished were really an ‘illustrious lady,’ that Tacitus, though twice mentioning her, should say nothing by which her family can be told. On the other hand, it is quite possible that Agrippina may have seen that the Calpurnia who occupied an ambiguous position in the palace, and who had helped to upset Messalina, was gaining undue influence over Claudius, and so may have removed her.

The emperor, now in his sixtieth year, was becoming more than ever mentally feeble, and Agrippina never suffered him to appear in public ceremonials alone; it was obvious to the world that the rudder of the vessel of the State was in her hand. We possess numerous indications that show how widely this was felt. In Ephesus, Miletus, Acmonia, Hierapolis, Mytilene, and probably many other cities, divine honours were given to her; medals were struck in Asiatic cities bearing her likeness; on those of Alexandria, and on Italic coins, she was represented as Ceres. On inscriptions she is named along with Claudius, or alone, as the daughter of Germanicus. An inscription given by Gruter tells us how two functionaries vowed an offering of ten pounds weight of silver for the health of the Emperor Claudius, and one of five for that of Nero, son of Agrippina. No oblation was made for Britannicus, which is significant.

The name of the empress was given this year to the colony of veterans settled on the Rhine at the capital of the Ubii, where Agrippina was born. The inhabitants consisted partly of natives, partly of the veterans, and partly of Roman traders. An inscription informs us that the date of the erection of this colony was on February 17th or 18th. At the same time Colonia Augusta Trevirorum (Trèves) was probably founded.

The dominant position of the empress was made manifest in Rome at the triumph of Claudius, consequent on the victories of Ostorius Scapula in Britain, and the capture of Caractacus. The fame of the valour of Caractacus had reached Rome, and 'all longed to behold the man who, for so many years, had defied the Roman arms.'

The people were summoned to see him, and the praetorian bands stood under arms. Two thrones had been erected, on one of which sat Claudius, on the other Agrippina, 'in full view of the assembly, —a thing as new as it was unauthorised by ancestral custom, for a woman to preside over the Roman ensigns. But she herself claimed a share in that empire which her ancestors had acquired.' Before the imperial pair moved the procession of captives, 'the servants and followers of the British king in their trappings and collars, with all the spoil of his wars borne along. Then came his brothers, his wife, and daughter, and lastly himself, attracting the gaze of all. All the rest stooped to supplicate for life—for it was the Roman custom at a triumph to massacre the captives—but not so he; standing before the imperial throne, he said: "If my control over prosperity had corresponded to my rank and to my fortune, I should have entered this city as a friend, not as a captive. Because you Romans aim at extending your dominion over all mankind, it does not follow that all men should cheerfully submit to the yoke. If you take my life, all will be forgotten; if you preserve my life, as long as I live I shall remain a monument of your clemency."'

Claudius pardoned Caractacus, with his wife and brothers, and, released from their chains, they did homage to him and to Agrippina.

The conquest of Britain gave Claudius an excuse for the extension of the Pomoerium, or bounds of the city, a thing that according to popular belief, could only be done by one who had extended the confines of the empire. As the realm stretched out so might the bounds of the city; the one expanded with the other. Claudius now included the



FIG. 103.—CLAUDIUS. Bust found at Otricoli; Vatican, Rotunda, No. 551.

Aventine within the confines. Although the Servian Wall included it, yet hitherto the Aventine had, out of religious prejudices, not been regarded as forming a portion of the city. An inscription commemorative of this still exists in Rome, and is interesting because in it is employed one of the three new letters which Claudius attempted to introduce into the alphabet. These letters were the digamma *F* for the consonant V, the anti-sigma *Ϸ* for BS and PS, and the sign *ʃ* for the sound between I and U, as in the second syllable of Aegyptus. Before his accession Claudius had published a tract advocating the use of these

characters, and now that he was emperor he issued an edict enforcing their use. Tacitus tells us that in his time inscriptions engraved in brass in the temples and squares bore these characters.

Claudius sought to introduce the Eleusinian mysteries into Rome, but opposed zealously the admission of a number of foreign rites and superstitions such as the mystic tendency of the age encouraged. This was why he so readily gave ear to accusations of magic, why he banished the Chaldaean astrologers, and why he forbade many secret religious worships that were creeping in and finding favour. His humanity also prompted him to make the human sacrifices of the Druids penal. Augustus had forbidden the citizens of Rome to take part in these sacrifices, but with the extension of the citizenship to Gauls, and the Romanising of the inhabitants of Gaul, Druidism had not only not ceased, but threatened to invade the capital and to proselytise the nobility, always eager after something new. Claudius forbade the cultus of Druidism, with its associated augury and charming for diseases, and he even put to death certain persons of distinction who in spite of his rescript continued to practise the bloody rites, or consult the suppressed ministers.

In December, A.D. 50, Nero had entered on his fourteenth year. With the conclusion of that it was customary for young Romans to assume the manly garb, and such days were to members of the imperial house also those in which they entered on offices of state, and people and soldiery expected gratuities and amusements.

A.U.C. 804.  
A.D. 51.  
Act. 60.

But Agrippina had reason to hasten the advancement of her son to manhood before the expiration of the legal term, for again signs in heaven and earth filled men with alarm and expectation of the death of the prince. Ill-omened birds were seen perched on the temples and other buildings that crowded the top of the Capitol; three suns appeared in the sky; the earth reeled and houses were overthrown, and in the commotion occasioned by the earthquake many lives were lost, amongst these probably the thirteen year old daughter of C. Ummidius Quadratus, governor of Dalmatia, whose monument still remains in Rome. The harvest had been bad, and famine prevailed. Agrippina obtained permission to have Nero invested with the toga before the proper time; on this occasion there was again an earthquake, and at night the skies flamed with auroral fires. Whatever bad omens might be drawn in private from these signs, public honours and tokens of confidence were showered on the young prince. Claudius himself led him into the senate and conferred on him the title of Princeps Juventutis, which involved the leadership of the knightly centuries. He was given proconsular authority with its insignia outside the city walls, and nominated to the consulship upon which he was to enter when he attained his twentieth year. The emperor rati-



fied all the honours passed by acclamation in the senate, and his adopted son thanked him for his condescension before the assembled fathers. At the same time Nero was received into the priestly colleges, and the knights dedicated to the consul-designate a shield and a memorial. Medals were struck, and the statue of Nero was erected alongside of those of the other members of the reigning house. The young prince was exhibited to the people and the guards in military attire, and he promised them liberal largesses. He placed himself at the head of the praetorians and marched before them with a shield on his arm.

Then followed a triumphal show in the circus in which Nero appeared in imperial vesture, whereas Britannicus walked in the simple garment of a child with the bulla about his neck.

In order further to bring the young crown-prince before the public, he was made to plead before the senate the grievances of the inhabitants of Bononia, which had suffered from a conflagration. He addressed the emperor and senate in a speech composed for him by Seneca, and obtained for the afflicted city a liberal grant of money.

When Claudius left the capital, as consul, to offer a sacrifice at the Latin feast in the Alban mountains, the praefecture of the city was granted to Nero, and although the emperor, before leaving, had given express orders that no cases of importance were to be submitted to the boy for judgment, yet the advocates disregarded his monition.

Not long after this a tumult broke out on account of a rise in the price of bread, and Claudius was assailed on the tribunal by an angry mob that heaped on him abuse, and pelted him with mouldy crusts. He was forced to vacate his chair and escape into the palace by a back entrance. In fact the magazines contained corn that would last for but fifteen days, so that fears of distress were entertained. Claudius sent soldiers to disperse the rioters, and issued a proclamation to assure the people that the deficiency would speedily be made good; and informed them that in the event of his death they were to look to Nero, who was sufficiently old to assume the reins of government and provide for the exigencies of the occasion. This was a distinct announcement of his intentions with regard to the succession; it was in accordance with the expectations of the people, and jumped with their inclinations.

Fortunately the winter was mild and the service of corn ships was not interrupted by storms, so that the distress was never acute.

According to the arrangement of Augustus, the praetorian guards were under the command of two prefects, and at the present time these were Lusius Geta and Rufus Crispinus, both men who had been deeply indebted to Messalina and were presumably ill-affected to her successor.

Agrippina, who was resolved to secure the devotion of the guards to herself and her son, pointed out to Claudius that a divided command was injurious to military discipline and advised him to appoint a single

commander over the whole body. When he agreed to her proposal, she obtained the nomination of Burrhus to this important post, the instructor of Nero in his military exercises, an admirable soldier and an upright man, also one wholly devoted to her cause.

In fact Agrippina was conscious that she had many enemies, and that in secret a combination of the discontented was being formed against her, with the intention of bringing Britannicus forward in opposition to her son Nero. She was given warning of this by a senator named Junius Lupus who raised an accusation against L. Vitellius, her influential agent, now a man well advanced in years. The charge was absurd; he was accused of conspiring for the throne, but it was just one to rouse the alarm of the feeble-minded emperor, and it required all the energy of Agrippina and the exertion of her power over him to obtain the acquittal of Vitellius and the banishment of his false accuser.

Agrippina, conscious of her danger, never left her husband unwatched. He was not to be trusted in public—he was almost certain to do something stupid unless she were by as his prompter. Thus one day when he sat in the senate to hear complaints, his seat was surrounded by the delegates of Bithynia, sent to complain of the exactions of their governor. They either spoke unintelligibly or else there was so much noise in the senate at the time that Claudius could not understand what they asked, and turning to those who surrounded him he inquired what these petitioners wanted. With great impertinence Narcissus said, 'They are thanking you for having given them so just a governor.' 'Very well then,' said Claudius, 'let him remain in office for two years longer.' After this incident Agrippina had a seat placed for her near his, so that she might prevent a repetition of any such blunders, and might guard against her husband incurring ridicule by his folly.

#### IX.—THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN NARCISSUS AND AGRIPPINA.

THE people of Rome, especially the nobility, were becoming impatient for a change. They knew that the emperor was in his dotage, and they chafed under the rule of a woman.

A. U. C. 805.

A. D. 52.

Aet. 61.

In his early years Claudius had been full of infirmities, his youth had been one succession of illnesses, but with full manhood he seemed to have shaken off his bodily ailments, though his mental condition never improved. His best friends could say of him little more than that he was well-meaning.

'In reading of the shattered health and frame of the prince who was raised unwillingly to the throne from his desk, at a period far beyond the middle of life, untrained for government, and with no natural bent towards affairs, we cannot but admire the force of the

Roman character, which appears to have borne this feeble creature through labours which might task the highest powers and the happiest disposition. Yet this incessant strain of mind and body seems to have been favourable to his health, which recovered its tone under the labours of the principate. In judging of the character of the poor old man, whose private failings have been elevated into notoriety, some allowance must be made for the coarseness of the times, and the ordinary licence of his associates. Nor must we forget how



FIG. 104.—AGRIPPINA MINOR.—Bust in Mus. Chiaramonti, No. 605.

readily the scandalous anecdotes of the day were accepted by annalists and biographers as veritable history.<sup>1</sup>

The Romans could ill brook the frankness with which their prince spoke of his former experiences, when he had been in the shade and in comparative poverty. The victuallers of Rome and the suburbs complained of the vintners furnishing meat meals to those who called at their taverns. In their view, the hungry should eat at one place and

<sup>1</sup> Merivale, *History of the Romans*, vi. p. 133.

drink at another. The case was tried in court. Claudius was present. He at once took the side of the vintners, or rather of the peasants who came marketing to Rome, and showed how hard it was for them to have to dine in one house and drink in another.<sup>1</sup> He recalled his own experiences when his means were cramped, and exclaimed, 'I ask you who can live without a scrap of meat?' The senators, instead of considering the kindly thought for the muleteers and day labourers with whom their emperor had associated in the time of his disgrace, were offended at his lack of dignity, and they held up their hands in horror when he proceeded to enumerate the little pot-houses whence he had formerly drawn his wine, and wherein he had sat and refreshed himself.

So also, it was thought ridiculous that he should promulgate a decree recommending the juice of the yew-tree as a specific against the bite of a viper; or at vintage-time should issue a reminder that the bungs of wine-casks should be well stopped with pitch,—when these were instances of a wish to impart useful instruction to the people.

It was also thought incompatible with his dignity as censor to dismiss a young man accused to him of dissolute conduct, when his father gave testimony in his favour, with the saying that 'a man's father was his proper censor.' Even his strict justice was derided. Because his attendant officers had swept into his court a number of persons, some charged with living in celibacy, others with want of children, others for being members of the senate without having the means to support their position, and the one set produced their wives, the second their children, and the third gave irrefutable evidence that they were in comfortable circumstances,—and in face of this evidence, Claudius did not punish them, the Roman nobility scoffed at him as an inefficient censor. A knight was accused of having stabbed himself. He stripped himself in court and asked to have the scar found. Claudius dismissed the case, to the disappointment of the crowd who desired to see a man executed for having attempted suicide. Delation and condemnation were a daily amusement and excitement to the people of Rome. They cared nothing whether those accused were guilty or innocent; what they desired was a sensation, and a judicial murder. They were restless—through all classes ran the fever of impatience for a change. It mattered little who succeeded to power so long as there was a successor. A sense of humiliation was prevalent in having at the head of the State a limping, stupid and dazed old man. It was in vain for the senate to forbid the consultation of oracles and prophets, in vain to banish magicians; in the restlessness of the public mind men and women would have recourse to those who pretended to have the power to read the future.

At the opening of the year, Furius Scribonianus, son of the bold

<sup>1</sup> The same case came up in the succeeding reign and then the victuallers carried their point.



rebel of A.D. 42, who was living in banishment with his mother Junia, was accused, along with her, of having consulted the Chaldaeans as to the termination of the emperor's life. Claudius was gracious enough for the second time to pardon 'the son of his enemy,' as he called him; but Scribonianus died shortly afterwards in exile.

In January of the same year the emperor, in a speech before the senate, brought forward the case of the marriage of free women with slaves. Such connections had become not uncommon, and it was advisable to make some rule about them. By decree of the senate a difference was made in the case of the consent of the master of the slave being given or withheld. In the former case the woman remained free, in the latter she passed into slavery, and all her children, the issue of the union, became slaves also. This law was maintained in the Code till the time of Justinian, and was named after Claudius. It was passed at the instigation of the freedman Pallas. At this time the insignia of a praetor were decreed to Pallas, together with a grant of a large sum of money; not for having suggested this law, but because he had well served the State, and had been a useful minister to the emperor. The excellent administration of government during the reign of Claudius, the useful works undertaken by him, the foundation of colonies, that had been neglected by Tiberius and Caius, the extension of the citizenship, the admission of provincial nobles into the senate, the useful laws passed in his reign, were due far more to the freedmen that directed the mind of the prince and held him to what was proposed, than to his own initiative and perseverance. They amassed colossal fortunes; but this was their pay for a thousand benefits bestowed upon the State by their orderly and prudent management.

In the foregoing year Nero had made a Latin speech as the advocate of the distressed city of Bononia. In this year he appeared on behalf of Rhodes, that had been deprived of its freedom in A.D. 44, and in a Greek oration, acquired by memory, he pleaded for a restoration of the lost privileges. His request was granted, and the grateful Rhodians, in honour of their advocate, struck medals bearing his head, surrounded by the solar rays.

Of the three important ministers of Claudius, one, Callistus, was dead; Pallas was devoted to the interests of Agrippina, but Narcissus, who had obtained the overthrow of Messalina, was dissatisfied at not having obtained the recognition for his services that he had expected, and at not standing first in the councils of the empress. Both Pallas and Narcissus were probably men of advanced age. Pallas was sufficiently old and experienced in A.D. 31 to have been trusted by Antonia in a critical affair that concerned the life and fortunes of the imperial house, he had then long served her as steward of her goods, and cannot have been at that date much younger than thirty-five. If that were so, he was now between fifty and sixty, not so old but that there was

scope for the disappointment and jealousy of his rival Narcissus to poison the public mind against him and the empress, and, as the event proved, whisper base insinuations into the imperial ear also.<sup>1</sup> Either Pallas warned Agrippina to be on her guard against him, or her own woman's tact sufficed to inform her that she had a dangerous enemy in Narcissus, and she did her utmost to break his power with Claudius.

For eleven years Narcissus had been engaged in directing the works for the drainage of the Fucine Lake. This lake lay over two thousand feet above the sea, and was thirty-five miles in circumference. Having no natural outlet, the villages on its banks were subject to frequent inundations, and as early as the time of Julius Caesar, the Marsi, who lived round about, petitioned for help and advice how to carry off the superabundant waters. Claudius undertook the construction of an emissary at his own cost, on condition that he should receive all the land reclaimed by the drainage. It was his intention to convey the waters into the Liris by a tunnel three and a half miles in length, and hewn, for a great part of the way, through the solid rock. The emissary was opened by Claudius and Agrippina with a great gladiatorial display in A.D. 52.

'A passage having been cut through the mountain between the lake and the river,' says Tacitus, 'in order that a greater number of persons might be induced to come and see the magnificence of the work, a sea-fight was got up on the lake itself. Claudius equipped galleys of three and four banks of oars, and manned them with 19,000 mariners; surrounding the space with a line of rafts, to limit the means of escape, but giving room enough in its circuit for the rowers to ply the oars, for the pilots to exert their skill, for the ships to be brought to bear upon each other, and for all the usual operations in a sea-fight. Parties of the praetorian guards, foot and horse, were stationed on decked ships. The shores, the adjacent hills, and the tops of the mountains, were crowded with a countless multitude, many from the neighbouring towns, others from Rome itself, impelled by desire to witness the spectacle, or coming in compliment to the prince; so that the appearance exhibited was that of a vast theatre. The emperor presided in a superb coat of mail, and not far from him sat Agrippina, in a mantle of cloth of gold. The battle, though between malefactors, was fought with the spirit of brave men; and, after great bloodshed, they were excused from pressing the carnage to extremities.'

Pliny and Suetonius give further details.

The hostile fleets were supposed to represent those of the Sicilians and Rhodians. On elevated seats in splendid apparel sat the emperor, Agrippina, and Nero. Britannicus is not mentioned. The

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus himself informs us that the charges of undue familiarity between Pallas and the empress were made by this disappointed and envious man. Narcissus is, as far as we know, the sole authority for them.—*Ann.* xii. 65.

signal for the combat to begin was a silver triton rising in the midst of the lake and blowing a blast from a mussel-shell. The fleets passed before the imperial daïs, and the criminals condemned to fight shouted, 'We, the death-doomed, salute thee!' whereupon Claudius replied, 'And I salute you in return.' Then there was an arrest in the proceedings. The unhappy men took the gracious salutation as a token that they were pardoned, and they sheathed their swords. Claudius, alarmed at their conduct, and misunderstanding it, hesitated, not knowing what to do. They refused pertinaciously to fight each other; then he thought to have them hewn down by the guards, and fire cast into their vessels. He sprang from his throne, and running up and down on the bank, screamed, with stammering lips and confused sounds to the victims to engage in the conflict. They accordingly submitted, and 'fought with all the courage of brave men.' After the battle had been carried on for some time, the emperor gave the sign to suspend the carnage.

'Then'—we quote Tacitus again—'the channel through which the water flowed off was exhibited to view, when the negligence of the workmen became manifest, as the work was not carried to the depth of the bottom or centre of the lake. The excavations were therefore, after some time, extended to a greater depth; and to draw the multitude once more together, a show of gladiators was exhibited upon bridges laid over the emissarium, in order to display a fight of infantry. Moreover, an erection for the purpose of a banquet at the place of exit of the waters caused great alarm to the assembly; for the force of the water rushing out carried away whatever was near it, dislodged what was further off, and terrified the guests with the crash and noise. At the same time Agrippina, converting the emperor's alarm to her own purposes, accused Narcissus, the director of the work, of avarice and robbery; nor did Narcissus repress his anger, but charged Agrippina with imperiousness, and with extravagant hopes.' This last was a clear insinuation as to the scheme for the succession of Nero, and of the resolve of Narcissus to frustrate it.

Considering that on both occasions there was mismanagement, Narcissus certainly was to blame. On the second occasion the reproaches of Agrippina provoked an exceedingly indecorous scene. After having publicly insulted the empress, Narcissus was well assured that he or she must fall, and he set to work to undermine her position with all the energy and determination of his character. He had destroyed one empress, and he would destroy another.

Soon after this, towards the close of the year, Claudius fell ill. He suffered from such internal pains that, as he himself said, he was tempted to put an end to himself. Nero appeared before the senate and vowed circus games for the recovery of his father.

A. U. C. 806.  
A. D. 53.  
Act. 62.

Claudius recovered, indeed; but it was obvious not to Agrippina only, but to the old emperor himself, that his days were numbered.

Again was Nero brought before the public eye as the patron and protector of the distressed. This time he pleaded in Greek the cause of Ilium, and asked that the city, whence the Julian race drew its origin—a city that might be called the mother of Rome—might be relieved from the burden of taxation; and naturally the demand of the crown prince was not refused. Nero was at this time in his sixteenth year, and Octavia, the emperor's daughter, was about twelve; an age at which Agrippina herself had been married. Why delay the marriage any longer? It was accordingly solemnised, and at its solemnisation the young prince gave the games which he had vowed during the illness of Claudius. There were races and fights with beasts. At the same time he solicited as a favour the release of Apamea Cibotos from taxation for the space of five years, on account of its almost complete destruction by fire.

But notwithstanding the acclamations of the people, Agrippina felt that the powerful freedman was a menace to her. T. Statilius Taurus, who had been governor of Africa, was charged with a tyrannous use of his power in the province, and his own legate denounced him in the senate. It was said that Agrippina coveted his gardens—as Messalina had coveted those of Valerius Asiaticus—because she took sides against the accused. He committed suicide before judgment was given; and the senate, in spite of her efforts to save him, expelled the accuser from their ranks. Agrippina was thus shown that her power, though still great, was not absolute, and might at any moment fail.

Various prodigies gave token to the capital, at the opening of the year A.D. 54, that the fate of Rome had reached a turning-point. The ensigns and tents of the soldiers were surrounded with lambent flames; a bloody rain fell; bees swarmed and settled on the Capitol; a pig was born with claws like a hawk; the statue of Drusus on the archway on the Appian road was struck with lightning; the doors of the temple of Jupiter Victor opened of their own accord; a general sickness broke out in Rome, and swept away many persons of distinction within a few months, among them a quaestor, an aedile, a tribune, a praetor, and a consul; and finally a comet hung like a flaming sword in the sky.

But there were other signs which, to a mind not steeped in superstition, were more significant of a crisis in affairs. Claudius's health was visibly failing, and he did not disguise from himself or from others that he was aware he had reached the term of life allotted to him. He made his will, and in it nominated his stepson as his successor, and made all his officers of state append their seals to the document.

Nevertheless it was obvious to Agrippina that Claudius had been alienated from her. Some one—and she could not doubt who it was—

A.U.C. 807.  
A.D. 54.  
Aet. 63.





FIG. 105—CLAUDIUS, as Jupiter. Statue found at Lanuvium; Vatican, Rotunda, No. 550.

had insinuated into his mind mistrust of the virtue of his wife ; and one day, after having in court sentenced an adulteress, at table during supper when flushed with wine, he let slip the threat that his marriage experiences had been unfortunate, but that having punished one false wife, he would find occasion to punish another.

Meeting Britannicus in a passage of the palace, he clasped him in his arms, and said to him, 'Be soon a man, and then you can punish certain offences.'

He resolved to give to Britannicus the manly habit before he had reached the proper age, as he was grown tall, like himself ; and he said, 'I do this that the Roman people may at last have a real Caesar.'

Agrippina clearly understood that Narcissus was biasing the weak mind of the failing man against her, and inspiring him with an ambition to see his own son supplant Nero. She dealt a blow at one whom she knew to be intriguing against her, Domitia Lepida, the sister of her first husband, Cn. Domitius, and the aunt of Nero. She was the daughter of Antonia, and granddaughter of Octavia, sister of Augustus ;<sup>1</sup> was an ambitious, unscrupulous woman, and aimed at supplanting her as the guardian of Nero, in the event of the death of Claudius. 'Vehement was the contention between them,' says Tacitus, 'whether aunt or mother should acquire predominance with Nero ; for Lepida laboured to engage his youthful mind by caresses and liberalities ; whilst Agrippina, on the contrary, treated him with sternness and threats.'

An accusation was brought against Lepida that 'she had assailed the emperor's marriage with imprecations ; that, moreover, she had disturbed the peace of Italy by neglecting to restrain the tumultuous behaviour of her bands of slaves in Calabria.' She was condemned to death, notwithstanding that every effort was made to save her by Narcissus ; and Nero himself appeared to give testimony against his aunt, who had protected him in childhood : a terrible lesson of heartlessness and ingratitude, taught the boy whilst his heart was yet tender, a lesson that was to be practised in later years against his own mother, the instigator of his conduct on this occasion.

The whole story of the condemnation of Lepida is mysterious. We certainly have not got at the secret spring that brought it about. Narcissus was in league with her. Of that there can be no question, for he strained every nerve to save her, and when defeated was prostrate with despair. He had nothing to hope from the accession of Britannicus, who would certainly put him to death for his action in destroying his mother. His safety depended on the succession to the throne of Nero, but of Nero under other influence than that of his mother. This, then, seems to have been his plan : by means of whispers in the ear of the emperor, and open attacks in the circle of his acquaintance, he hoped to destroy confidence in the moral character of Agrippina, and by this

<sup>1</sup> So Suetonius. According to Tacitus, she was the daughter of the other Antonia.

means to obtain her fall ; then Nero, under the direction of his aunt, would secure his future to Narcissus. Agrippina cut away the prop from under him, and removed her rival.

Then the confidence of Narcissus gave way. In the midst of this vast accumulation of anxieties, he was attacked with illness, and for the recovery of his health had recourse to the soft air and salubrious waters of Sinuessa.<sup>1</sup>

Agrippina had triumphed. Her opponent had thrown up the ball. Claudius was now completely under her domination, and she had nothing to fear. Nero was still very young, too young to govern ; no doubt whatever remained as to his succession. That he had been appointed to succeed was known to all Rome. No party of any consideration, probably none at all, maintained the claims of Britannicus. Her only rival, Lepida, she had brushed out of her path, and the opponent in the palace whom she had dreaded and resisted, had withdrawn from the contest, and would never return.

Claudius began to fail rapidly in the heats of summer. When he nominated the consuls, he appointed no one to fill the office after October. At the last assembly of the senate in which he made his appearance, he earnestly exhorted his two sons, before the assembled fathers, to live in amity with each other, and he commended them, tender in years, to the care of the senate. Moreover, in the last cause he heard from the tribunal he repeated emphatically before the court : ‘ I am now arrived at the last stage of my mortal existence.’ And those present could see in his worn and pallid appearance that the shadow of death was on him.

With regard to his death the story told by Tacitus is not to be trusted. Suetonius, who wrote much at the same time as Tacitus, has no such dramatic long-drawn tale to unfold. He tells us that though it was generally agreed that Claudius was taken off by poison, yet ‘ where and by whom administered remains in uncertainty.’ One story was that he was poisoned whilst feasting with the priests in the Capitol ; another was that the deadly potion was given him by Agrippina at his own table, in mushrooms. Nor, according to Suetonius, were the accounts alike as to how he died. Some related that he became speechless, and died about daybreak ; this version is probable enough, as he had had a paralytic stroke in youth, he in all likelihood had one also in old age. Others said that he fell into a deep sleep, and that a second dose of poison was given him in water-gruel. But all was uncertain. Tacitus gives with confidence the story that has most dramatic interest :—

‘ It was then that Agrippina, long resolved on the deed, hastened to seize the occasion when it offered, well furnished as she was with

<sup>1</sup> The text says that Claudius went to Sinnessa. But this is certainly a corruption of the text. Claudius did not die at Sinuessa, but died in Rome whilst Narcissus was away in Campania, ill with the gout. Dio Cass. lx. 54.

wicked agents, and deliberated on the nature of the poison she would use ; she considered that if it were sudden and instantaneous in its operation, the desperate achievement might be brought to light : if, however, she chose materials slow and consuming in their operation, then Claudius, when his end approached, having discovered the treachery, might resume his affection for his son : something of a subtle nature was therefore resolved upon, such as would disorder the brain and take time to kill.<sup>1</sup> If this narrative contains any grain of truth, it is in this last indication of the condition of Claudius previous to his death,—that his mind failed, and his vital powers slowly expired.

‘An experienced artist in such preparations was chosen, her name was Locusta ; lately condemned for poisoning, and long reserved as one of the instruments of despotism. By this woman’s skill the poison was concocted ; Halotus, one of the eunuchs, was selected to administer it, his office it was to serve up the emperor’s repasts and prove the viands by tasting them. In fact, all the particulars of this transaction were soon after so thoroughly known<sup>2</sup> that the writers of those times are able to recount how the poison was poured into a dish of delectable mushrooms, but it was not at once seen to operate, and it was uncertain whether Claudius were not stupified with the wine he had drunk ; his stomach readily relieved itself. Agrippina therefore became alarmed ; as her life was at stake, she thought little of the suspicion she might incur, and called in the aid of Xenophon, the physician, who was already privy to her guilty purposes. It is believed that he, as if he purposed to assist Claudius in his efforts to vomit, put a feather down his throat besmeared with deadly poison.’

This entire story is conspicuously a malignant fable. There was no necessity for a crime. Agrippina was free from all who could shake her position. The old man was rapidly failing, and he had publicly proclaimed that he had not many months more life in him. It is ridiculous to suppose that both Locusta poisoned the dish, and that also the domestic physician was brought into the plot with a second poison—and one to be administered with a feather.

With flagging powers, the emperor ate plentifully of one of the most indigestible of dishes, and one most unsuitable for his feeble condition. The natural result was that he became faint and sick ; and his wife sent at once for the physician, who tickled his throat to induce vomiting. Most probably a stroke ensued, and he lay in torpor till gradually his life ebbed away.

The story was naturally fastened on and improved. It was said

<sup>1</sup> This is eminently characteristic of Tacitus, who proceeds to read the thoughts of those who lived several years before he was born. The death of Claudius was seven years previous to his birth.

<sup>2</sup> If so, how was it that Suetonius was in uncertainty ? How was it that the story was allowed to get about when Agrippina was able to rid herself of her accomplices



that the deadly poison was put as stuffing into a remarkably fine and large mushroom ; that Agrippina took out of the dish a small one and ate it, to encourage the old man to take the fatal plant. As naturally also was it concluded that Agrippina had sent for the physician to hasten the end of her husband, not to relieve him in his distress. Now the



FIG. 106.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust in the Louvre.

facts seem to have been these: The day was October 12th, and was the festival instituted in commemoration of the return of Augustus in B.C. 19 from the provinces, and the erection of the altar of Fortuna redux. Claudius dined at the banquet of the priests on the Capitol,

and it was there that after partaking of the mushrooms he became faint, and was carried thence to the palace. This fact alone seems to preclude the probability of poison having been administered.

Claudius died at some time in the morning of October 13th,<sup>1</sup> but as Livia had concealed the death of Augustus till all measures had been taken to secure the succession of Tiberius, so now did Agrippina disguise the decease of Claudius till the guards had been communicated with. She bade the senate assemble, and announced to it the dangerous sickness of the emperor, and requested the consuls and priests to offer vows and prayers for his recovery. The dead man lay wrapped in light coverings on his couch. It was pretended that he was alive and had asked to be entertained. Accordingly, on this conveyed request, dancers and buffoons were introduced, who capered and cut their jokes in the presence of the corpse, to the beating of a drum, and the tinkle of bells. In a room hard by, Agrippina had gathered about her the children of Claudius, Britannicus and his sisters, Octavia and Antonia, and there retained them, weeping and apparently heart-broken at her loss. Again and again she clasped Britannicus to her heart, and sobbingly called him 'the image of his dear lost father,' and 'her only comfort in her sorrow.'

The day had been designated by the soothsayers as one of desolation and ill-omen, with the exception of the hour of noon. According to the general opinion, Agrippina retained Britannicus till Nero had been proclaimed. Meanwhile, bulletins were sent out every hour to the senate to announce some amendment in the condition of the sick man, and hot compresses were carried into his room and applied to his body. Every gate of the palace was guarded by the soldiery, and no one was admitted within.

Suddenly, at noon, the gates were thrown open, and Nero stepped forth, attended by Burrhus, commander of the praetorian guard, who at once advanced to the cohort that kept watch in the outer court of the palace. He announced to the soldiers the decease of the prince, and presented to them his adopted son and chosen successor. Nero was received with shouts of joy, placed in a litter, and borne to the camp. Here and there a voice was raised for Britannicus, but it met with no response. In the camp Nero addressed the praetorians and made them promises of a largess equal to what had been given them by the late emperor, his father,<sup>2</sup> whereupon with loud cries he was saluted as emperor. The senate followed the lead of the praetorians. The consent of the legions in the provinces was received not long after.

But Nero knew to whom he owed the throne, and when in the evening he returned to the palatine, and the tribune asked the new emperor for the watchword, he gave him 'The best of mothers.'

<sup>1</sup> So perhaps; but the author of the *Ludus de Morte Claudii* says that he died just after noon.

About £150 apiece.

That same night Agrippina despatched a messenger to Sinuessa to announce her triumph to Narcissus. He accepted his defeat and committed suicide.

Strange does it seem, but at the same time it is comforting to see, in the midst of this storm of dark passion the lighting up of a gleam of new hope : in the Epistle of S. Paul to the Romans, the Apostle salutes the faithful ' that be of the household of Narcissus.'

#### PORTRAITS OF CLAUDIUS.

' Claudius appears in the extant busts and statues as a man of between 55 and 60, usually with dignified expression, occasionally, however, with one of vacancy, even of stupidity. He has a flat skull, hair flowing forward, a broad furrowed brow, with a vertical fold in the middle, dull eyes, with fleshy brows drawn upwards towards the root of the nose, whose swelling muscle covers the upper eyelid. A straight, somewhat blunt, nose ; a broad, well-moulded mouth ; a weak chin, which often sinks into the throat without any decided line of demarcation ; a thick neck and protruding ears. That there should be artistic modification is self-evident, and this is specially the case in regard to the degree of expression, or force of will indicated. Whereas some heads, as the colossal one in the Braccio Nuovo (No. 3), convey an impression, not indeed of a man remarkable for energy and intelligence, but of one thoroughly dignified and of sound abilities ; others, on the other hand, bear the stamp of exhaustion and dissatisfaction, not easily distinguishable from that of old age ; in others, again, that intellectual deficiency is perceptible which historians attribute to him, or there may be traced an acquired stupidity produced by excess of wine.'<sup>1</sup>

The resemblance of Claudius to his father is remarkable, if the bust in the Capitoline Museum be Drusus, but his father had a better developed forehead, more firmly arched and better moulded eyebrows, and a chin that was split in the middle. This divided chin indeed is indicated slightly in some of the busts, but it was never in Claudius as peculiar a feature as in his father. Both had a ring or crease formed from the nostrils, reaching under the chin, such as we encounter again in Trajan.

The glandular swellings of the throat, due to the scrofulous condition of Claudius, are noticeable in the busts, and these are not found in those of Drusus.

There is almost invariably a distressed, puzzled expression in the face, which is not absent even when Claudius is deified and invested with the attributes of Jupiter.

<sup>1</sup> Bernoulli, *Römische Ikonographie*, ii. p. 245.

1. Indeed the great statue in the Vatican, of Claudius, with wreath of oak leaves, the eagle of Zeus at his side, found at the ancient Lanuvium in 1865, provokes a laugh; the statue is that of a god, and the face that of a very puzzle-headed man, dazzled by the light into which he strives to look, and with a comical effort to appear dignified. (Fig. 105.)

2. The Otricoli colossal head in the Vatican is very interesting; it has a frown, very different from that of Caius. The frown of Caligula is that of sullenness, it is the frown of menace. That of Claudius is indicative, like that of Tiberius, of inability to endure a glare of light, of short-sightedness. In this bust the eyebrows are cut much sharper and bolder than usual, but it must be remembered it was not intended to be looked at from the point of view at which it is now exhibited, but was on a colossal statue planted on a pedestal, and looked up to, when the effect would be very different. (Fig. 103.)

3. The colossal statue in the Lateran, that came from the theatre of Cervetri, resembles another colossal bust, No. 18, in the Braccio Nuovo of the Vatican, and is slightly idealised.

4. The bust in the Capitoline Museum differs somewhat from the rest, but there is, I think, no reason to dispute its being rightly attributed.

5. The colossal bust at Naples, falsely named Galba, came from the Farnese collection. The nose is new. (Fig. 96.)

6. The bronze statue in the same gallery from Herculaneum was found along with a dedicatory inscription, but is poor as a portrait.

7. A statue larger than life at Turin, the head crowned with oak leaves, badly restored. It was found at Susa.

8. The statue in the Louvre, found at Gabii, is undoubtedly intended for Claudius.

9. Another there from the Campana collection is less tampered with than most of the pieces of sculpture from that collection, but as a portrait is not of much importance.

Another statue in the same gallery is a Campana fabrication.

10. A fine statue of Claudius in civil dress, in the Vatican, Braccio Nuovo, No. 117 (see Fig. 90).

11. A bronze bust in the Louvre with laurel crown; the nose pointed; the face shorter than usual; its genuineness as an antique is questionable.

12. A fine bust, full of character, in the Brunswick Museum, almost certainly taken from life. Engraved in full and profile by Bernoulli, Taf. xviii. (Fig. 92.)

13. A statue, half naked, heroic, in the Chiaramonti Gallery, No. 591. The head does not belong to the statue.

14. Seated statue found at Herculaneum (Fig. 89). The head is either a make-up, or is modern, and this must not be relied on as a portrait, but it is said to have been modelled after an antique bust.



15. Youthful bust in the Capitoline Museum, Sala delle Colombe, No. 58. Ears stuck forward; in good preservation, but the nose a restoration.

16. A statue in the Louvre, No. 2401, a youth with *bulla*, is almost certainly Claudius; the ears thrust forward, the characteristic creases round the mouth, the distressed brow, flat head and enlarged throat, are all distinctly features of Claudius. The statue is unnamed in the collection.

17. Bust in the Louvre, Penthellic marble, nose and upper lip restored. The ears stuck forward in the grotesque fashion common to most portraits of Claudius that are not idealised. No. 2442.

Of gems, the finest is the sardonyx in Windsor Castle, undoubtedly Claudius; the fleshy eyebrows, the chin falling away into the throat, the latter unduly large owing to disease, the large ears, do not admit of a question as to the identity.

The great Viennese cameo of Claudius and Messalina opposite Tiberius and Livia (the two latter idealised in deified youth), has been already noticed. A chalcedony representing Claudius full face, also at Vienna, given by Bernoulli, Taf. xxviii. 2, as an attempt at portraiture, is undeserving of consideration.

There are several good profiles on the medals of Claudius. On these the swollen neck is generally indicated. The best belong to the year A.D. 41, the year when he was proclaimed emperor.

# NERO.

## I.—THE EMPRESS MOTHER.

THE proclamation of Nero was followed by the death of M. Junius Silanus, proconsul of Asia, elder brother to the L. Junius Silanus, who had been betrothed to Octavia, and had committed suicide on the day of the marriage of Agrippina to her uncle. M. Silanus was a phlegmatic, amiable man, whom Caligula had called 'the golden sheep,' and neither Caius nor Claudius had entertained the smallest suspicion that he aspired to the throne, although, through his mother, Aemilia Lepida, he was descended from Augustus.<sup>1</sup> It was pretended at once that he had died by poison administered to him, by order of Agrippina, by two managers of the emperor's domestic revenues in Asia, a Roman knight and a freedman. How these men could have succeeded in 'administering it to the proconsul at a banquet, so openly that they could not escape detection,' is not explained. Silanus was surrounded by his own servants who were devoted to him, and had his taster to try meats before they were presented to him. The motive alleged by Tacitus for his poisoning was a talk in Rome that 'Nero had scarcely arrived at manhood, and that Silanus was of staid and mature age, of unblemished character, and of the lineage of the Caesars.' There was another brother in Rome, D. Silanus Torquatus, consul in A.D. 53, the year before the death of Claudius, but as he did not happen to die, gossip was forced to accuse Agrippina of killing the brother who was in Asia, and the gossipers to wonder that she should spare the Silanus under her hand.

Agrippina was now at the height of her ambition: her son was emperor, though a boy of seventeen, and she was regent. Nero was an amiable, yielding, and affectionate boy, loving his mother, but fearing her more than he loved her. His eyes were blue, his hair light, and he had inherited something of the Julian beauty, so that at this period he may have seemed, as Seneca describes him, 'a young Apollo.' But his neck was short, his brow low, and there was not in him the promise of height that there was in Britannicus, the scion of a tall race. He was

<sup>1</sup> He was born the year that Augustus died, and was therefore aged forty. Aemilia Lepida was daughter of Julia minor, by her husband L. Paullus, and Julia minor was granddaughter of Augustus.

short-sighted, and this occasioned a contraction of his brows, especially when looking at a distant object. Later on he wore a polished emerald as an eye-glass.

His intellectual abilities were small, but he had a remarkably good memory. Not only did he readily learn by heart the Latin and Greek speeches written for his delivery, but he also knew nearly every one of the knights by name. His education had been neglected by his aunt Lepida, and when he was taken in hand by Seneca, the philosopher



FIG. 107.—NERO. Bust in the Uffizi Pal. Florence.

found that he lacked application, and was entirely without taste for studies graver than music and poetry. Nero's very first act as emperor was to summon to his court the singer Terpnus; and turning with impatience from the study of philosophy, he devoted himself to singing, dancing, painting, sculpture, and the composition of verses. He moreover took enthusiastically to chariot-driving.

For the first five years of his reign he did not trouble himself about

domestic or foreign affairs, leaving these to the hands of his ministers, and threw himself with ardour into the cultivation of the arts.

At first, to keep up appearances, he submitted to the discharge of certain not too exacting formalities. He delivered a somewhat extravagant panegyric on the deceased emperor at his funeral, written for him by Seneca, who was already engaged on his *Farce on the Death of Claudius Caesar*, and he made a speech, composed for him by the same man, before the senate, in which he offered the fairest promises of good and liberal government. Indeed he suffered Seneca to stuff the speech with all his own principles, and he accepted it and stamped it with his authority, by speaking it unaltered before the conscript fathers, who heaped on him in return every honour at their command.

Belonging to the early days of Nero, to Nero as a child, says Viktor Rydberg, we have several busts and statues. 'One of the latter, small, in toga, of about the age of eight years, is in the National Museum at Naples. A strange face it has, the features have in them something more childish than the years. Brow and eyes have a dreamy look of precocious sensibility. By the side of this is seen a bust of Nero at the age of fifteen or sixteen. No one ever looked out into the world with more cheerful glance than did this youth. Enjoyment of life is visible in every feature, brightened rather than subdued by the dreamy cloud that hangs over the eyes. But the brow is open, the cheeks are fresh and full, the mouth is smiling, the whole aspect simple and marked with confidence in the future that was to realise his rosy dreams; and yet studying that face one is constrained to admit that it is far from inspiring in others the same confidence. The small up-curved upper-lip speaks of the aesthetic epicure, and of something worse. Put beside this bust of Nero one of the many we have of the young Marcus Aurelius, and we see the contrast at once. In the face of the latter, even as a child, there are thought, sincerity, and under its sadness a promise of light; in the face of the child Nero, lurking behind its joyous smile, is a threat of darkness.'

Having no inclination for the duties of government, Nero cheerfully suffered others to relieve him of them, and there were those at hand ready to do so: the empress-mother, Seneca, Burrhus, and some of the freedmen. To them it is due that during the first five years of the reign of Nero so much was done to improve the movement of the machine of state, to restore at least a show of liberty to the senate, and to reduce the burdens that weighed on the people. These five years of their direction of affairs were afterwards characterised by the emperor Trajan as the happiest period of Rome under the rule of all the sovereigns.

And they were the happiest in the life of Nero, for he was in the full vigour of youth, his mind untroubled by disease, and his conscience unburdened by crime. He put from himself, and put upon those



whom he frankly admitted to be better able to discharge them, all the obligations attaching to his position, whilst he drank to the dregs the cup of pleasure offered to his lips. His years of adolescence were years of wild oats sowing, and he must not be judged too harshly for his follies at this period. He was but a boy, and he knew himself to be a prince. He was surrounded by flatterers of his own age, and he had not the moral or mental capacity to subjugate his love of pleasure to a sense of duty.

When dusk closed in he was accustomed to draw on a felt cap—the badge of an emancipated slave—or a fur hood such as was worn by the peasantry, to hitch on a sham beard, clothe himself in old garments, and thus disguised, along with his comrades of like age and humour—Otho, of noble Etruscan race, Senecio, a freedman's son, Petronius, director-in-chief of the imperial pleasures, and others of like kidney—to leave the palace and the better quarters of the city and to rollick in the suburbs, frequent the lowest taverns, and commit all kinds of disorders in the streets. Under the cover of night, a full purse in hand, this prince Hal of the old world gave small hopes of recovery from his early dissipations. The trophies of these expeditions: torn clothes, carried off in a scuffle with women in the street; bottles and jugs, stolen from public-houses; broken fountain-nozzles, wrenched-off shop signs, were conveyed in triumph to the palace, and were then given away or were sold by auction, among the servants of the court, and the money they realised was divided among the heroes of the adventure.

Relying on their strength or their numbers, this party of young rascals cudgelled the watchmen, way-laid men returning from a guild meeting and threw them into the sewers. Sometimes, indeed, the imperial party got off worst, and returned to the palace beaten black and blue, and with scratched faces. Pliny has preserved to us the receipt for the salves used by the emperor and his companions on the morning after these frays, for rubbing on their wounded bodies, or for disguising the marks of the cudgels on their faces.

A scuffle among the people was as much a delight to Nero as it had been to his uncle Caius. He withdrew the guards from the theatres and circus, where hitherto they had maintained order, so that the excitable people might come to blows in their partisanship for favourite actors or rival colours. The emperor on such occasions was concealed in a box above the proscenium, and when the antagonists began to pelt one another with stones, or knock each other about with the legs of benches, he would throw like weapons among them. On one such occasion he cut open the head of a praetor. His nocturnal rambles were brought to an end by his being beaten till he was nearly dead by a senator for some insolence shown to his wife.

The fancy for driving gradually gained the upper hand. Even when a child he had a little ivory chariot with horses as a toy to

thrust along on the polished surface of the marble table; but he speedily got beyond such toys, and drove four horses abreast. At first he practised in the palace gardens, but when he became fairly adept, he gave an exhibition of his powers before a great crowd in the circus, Maximus, one of the freedmen, dropping a napkin as a sign for him to start, in the place where the magistrates were wont to give the signal.

His love for horses had been manifest from early childhood. Caius, his uncle, it will be recalled, had the same passion. His tutors were obliged to forbid his 'horse talk' as he seemed to have no other object of interest. On one occasion, as a boy, he was overheard lamenting to his fellow-pupils the fall of a charioteer of the green faction, who was dragged about the circus at the tail of his chariot and severely injured. His tutor overheard him, and, thinking it unworthy of a prince to feel pity for a mere slave, he reprimanded him for his ill-placed compassion. Nero endeavoured to turn the rebuke by pretending that he was talking of Hector.

Nero remained all his life an enthusiast for horse-racing. He rewarded the old chariot-drivers when past work with mantles of honour and pensions. The trainers became so assured that they might exact what price they liked for their services, that they organised the first strike on record. As the praetor, Aulus Fabricius, refused to pay the extortionate prices they demanded, they withheld their horses, and he endeavoured to amuse the people with dogs harnessed to the chariots. But even so, he could only race the white and red favours against each other. He was unable to send the dark green and the blue into the racecourse, either because he could not sweep together a sufficiency of dogs, or because he could not get hold of the racing chariots. Then Nero, who favoured the green, interfered, and appointed a fixed price at which the trainers were bound to furnish horses, men, and vehicles for the circus.

The frivolity, the incapacity of Nero to rise to a perception of the duties of his position, were a disappointment to his mother. She reproached him, and that in harsh terms. He had a yielding nature, and had obeyed her as a child with unquestioning readiness. Possibly she lacked tact in her treatment of him, but his was not a nature over which she could hope to rule for long, however carefully she managed him. For his was a limited intelligence, and there was an absence of independent force of will, so that he was certain to become the prey of such advisers as most flattered his vanity. Vanity was his ruling characteristic, and his companions had but to hint to him that he, the lord of the world, was governed by his mother, to impel him to resent her authority. A breach was inevitable. This Agrippina could not believe. She had before her the history of Tiberius and Livia, their position analogous to that of her own son and herself, but she shut her eyes to the warning contained in that story, and when the rupture occurred it took her completely by surprise.

Although the young emperor did his best to exhibit in public his respect for his mother and the unity of hearts that reigned between them, it could not escape the observation of the watchful that two different currents of interest ran below the apparently placid surface. On one side stood Agrippina, haughty, relying on the services she had rendered her son, on his duty to her as a mother, and on that implicit obedience which he had hitherto exhibited. On the other side stood Seneca and Burrhus, the tutors she herself had given to Nero, who had now risen from their position, Seneca to be the counsellor of his former pupil, the framer of his speeches, and director of his policy in all internal affairs; Burrhus was minister of war. Both these men were in full accord with each other. Pallas still retained the ministry of finances, and he naturally stood on the side of his patroness. The Roman nobility were envious of the wealth of Pallas, and considered him haughty because he gave his servants their directions in writing, therein following the example of Augustus. But this was part of his methodical habits, which had made him an admirable financial administrator, and had filled the treasury, so that on the accession of Nero the most copious bounties could be given to the soldiery and people without exhausting it.

Following the example of his predecessor, Nero assembled the senate in the imperial library adjoining the temple of the Palatine Apollo, of which a few graceful pillars remain upright. This great hall was adorned with statues of the most famous orators and writers; and into this Agrippina had a door opened, behind which, hidden by an embroidered curtain, she could hear what was debated. Nero rarely troubled the senate with his presence, and that being the case, Agrippina deemed it important to be aware of what was being transacted. But the fact that she was present, though concealed, angered the fathers, and she was constrained in silence to hear many a covert reference to her ambition and pride that made her ears tingle, and to find that measures, on the passing of which she had set her heart, were rejected. The question had been mooted in the senate during the reign of Claudius whether advocates should receive pay from their clients, and when the senate proposed forbidding the practice, Claudius, with good sense, had interfered and named a moderate price as their remuneration. This measure was again proposed, and although Agrippina strongly insisted that to reverse the decision of her late husband was an insult to his memory, the fathers carried the point against her wishes.

Finally an incident occurred which showed to the empress-mother that the rival party was gaining the upper hand. An embassy from Armenia arrived in Rome to solicit the interference of the prince in the distracted condition of the country. Agrippina announced that she would be present at the reception at the side of her son. Such a proceeding was unheard of, and the conscript fathers were aghast at the introduction of such a precedent. Seneca alone preserved his calmness. A

word from him induced the young emperor to rise from his throne as his mother entered, descend the steps and meet Agrippina as she advanced up the hall, and with her to leave the assembly, and adjourn the reception till another day.

From this moment the ministers contrived to stop all interference of Agrippina in the affairs of state. They had everything thenceforth their own way, and did not abuse their opportunities. Nero did not interfere. The business of the government was distasteful to him, unless it involved a bit of stately ceremonial. Two accusations of high treason brought before him he refused to have gone into. When he was brought an order for the execution of a highway robber, and his signature was required, 'Alas!' said he, 'why was I ever taught to write?'

If at any time, urged by his mother, or by Burrhus and Seneca, he really engaged himself in the affairs of state, it was to commit some such folly as he was nearly guilty of one day when with a dash of the pen he proposed to release the whole empire from all indirect taxes and duties. But he seems to have entertained a certain measure of desire to deal justly, when it fell to him to pronounce judgment in a cause brought before his tribunal. Unlike Claudius, he would not deliver it off-hand, but took away with him all the minutes to consider them in private, probably to submit them to a competent adviser. Almost certainly at the instigation of Seneca, he recalled and reinstated Plautius Lateranus, who having been involved in the fall of Messalina, had been degraded and banished.

Meanwhile the day of the ruin of Agrippina's power approached. Salvius Otho and Claudius Senecio, 'two handsome lads, first of all unknown to his mother, and then, in spite of her opposition, A.U.C. 808. had insinuated themselves into the good graces of the A.D. 55. young prince,' and acted as his evil genii. Seneca and Burrhus supposed that Nero would weary of his boyish pranks, and settle down as he grew older. Both they and his mother represented to him the impropriety of his conduct, and he assumed a penitential air and promised amendment, but when their backs were turned forgot his undertaking. His youthful companions constantly dinned into his ear that it was not fitting for him to endure reproof. 'Why do you consider these people? Do you not know that you are emperor, and that it is their place to obey you, and not yours to submit to them?'

At last it came to this, says Dion, that he prided himself in setting himself against his mother's advice, and showing no respect whatever for the admonitions of Seneca and Burrhus.

But the standard of morality set before his pupil by Seneca was not high. 'Be courteous and moderate,' he enjoined. 'Shun cruelty and rapine; abstain from blood.' And with a prince pleased with his popularity, such advice was not hard to practise. 'Compensate yourself with the pleasures of youth without compunction,' was Seneca's further



exhortation; 'amuse yourself, but hurt no man.' Such sanction for licence was readily followed, and when occasion came to practise restraint from blood, it was disregarded. Seneca showed little knowledge of human nature when he gave such counsel. The plan of Seneca and Burrhus was to govern Nero by winking at his youthful errors, and they justified to themselves their tolerance of his follies and faults by the assurance that they might by this means save him from plunging into vices more odious and more fatal.

Nero had never cared for his wife, Octavia, forced on him for state reasons, and though she was young, and of approved virtue, he took a violent dislike to her. He and Britannicus had not been on good terms, and some of his dislike for the unfortunate epileptic half-brother extended to the sister. Nero was eighteen when his heart was excited by a real passion; and the person by whom his affections were engaged was a Greek freedwoman, named Acte. So strong and hot was his passion that he suborned men of consular rank to swear she was of royal descent, and declared his intention of divorcing Octavia and marrying her. Seneca and Burrhus had watched the growth and progress of this first love, and were disposed to wink at it. They would prevent Nero committing such a folly as marrying the girl, and they were persuaded that as the passion was so hot it would speedily burn itself out. But when the fact of this attachment reached the ears of Agrippina, she lost all control over herself; her Julian pride rose up in disgust at the idea of association of one of the divine race with a girl who had been a slave. A violent scene ensued. The indignant empress-mother forgot all her prudence, and poured forth a torrent of contemptuous words. What! was a freedwoman to share with her the love of her son! A serving-maid to be her daughter-in-law. She completely overshot her mark. The abuse she heaped upon Acte, upon her son, made him stubborn and wounded his self-esteem. Historians have not recorded anything against Acte; she never employed her power over Nero to obtain the ruin of an enemy. She was modest and unassuming, and her love for Nero was sincere; and when he turned from her, after she had possessed his heart for four years, she sank into profound melancholy.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the charm of the forbidden, and the secrecy of the attachment, exercised their power over the youthful and inexperienced prince.

Nero revenged himself for the slight put on his favourite, and the violence of language employed towards himself, by disgracing Pallas, relieving him of his office as treasurer, and dismissing him from court. This blow was keenly felt by the empress-mother, who was now thoroughly alive to the fact that her control over her son was slipping from her. She changed her conduct, threw aside her pride, and stooped to solicit the alienated affections of her son. She offered to

<sup>1</sup> *Octavia*, v. 194-6.

withdraw her opposition to Acte, but Nero had been for some time chafing at the authority exercised over him by Agrippina, and he caught at the opportunity for establishing his independence, and in so doing was sustained by Seneca and Burrhus, and encouraged by Otho and Senecio.

Reproaching herself for having for a moment stooped to her son, Agrippina chafed against her loss of power, and cast about wildly for some means of regaining it. Nero had no wish to come to an open breach with his mother, though resolved to withdraw from her dictation; and he made several attempts to soothe her resentment, but was met with rebuff. An instance has found its way into Tacitus. The emperor occupied a portion of the palace in which was the cabinet where were preserved the state garments and jewelry that were worn by the consorts of the Caesars. With purpose to give his mother a pleasure, Nero selected from the store one of the most magnificent suits, and some of the most valuable gems, and sent them as a present to Agrippina. But instead of receiving thanks, he was informed that his mother regarded the offer as an insult that had been premeditated; that he had sent her the trinkets as a hint to keep her hands off what she considered properly belonged to herself. Intermediaries exaggerated what she had said, and excited the dissatisfaction of Nero.

To increase her irritation, a charge of high treason was brought against Pallas, and although Seneca himself defended him, and he was acquitted, it was a significant sign of the turn of the tide against her that men should dare to bring her favourite before the courts. She completely lost her head, and launched forth into threats against her ungrateful son. She declared that she would betake herself with Britannicus to the camp of the Praetorians, and bid them choose between Nero on one side with his tutor Seneca and the cripple-handed Burrhus, and on the other herself, the daughter of Germanicus, and Britannicus, the son of the late emperor. The threat was as idle as it was foolish. Burrhus was commander of the Praetorians, and the men were hardly likely to take part against their chief officer, and against a young emperor who had favoured them in every way, and had given them no cause for resentment and desire for a change. But the threat—if ever made—we have the authority of Tacitus alone for it—alarmed Nero, and we are told to believe that thereupon he resolved to relieve himself of a possible danger by the removal of Britannicus, as Caius had removed Tiberius Gemellus.

To the period immediately preceding the breach with his mother belong the medals and gems that bear the busts of Nero along with his mother. On these she appears as an elderly woman. In A.D. 55 she was in her fortieth year. On a coin of Nero and Agrippina she appears much the same as on one where she is represented along with Claudius, with elaborately curled hair, gathered behind into a plait that

hangs down to her shoulders. As portraits, these heads cannot be accepted, so widely do they differ from those which represent her head alone; the character of the nose, indeed the whole facial outline, being different. It is, however, possible that she may have lost her teeth, which would have materially changed the contour of her face.

## II.—THE DEATH OF BRITANNICUS.

NERO entered on the second year of his reign, and already the accord between himself and his mother was broken. We find in Tacitus, in Suetonius, and Dio, that he is charged with the murder of his comrade in youth and half-brother, the unhappy Britannicus. The story is given with great detail by Tacitus, and Suetonius adds particulars that serve to render it one of the most dramatic and terrible incidents in the history of the Caesars. We will take the story as told, and afterwards see whether much reliance can be placed on it.

A. U. C. 808.  
A. D. 55.  
Act. 18.

According to Tacitus, Agrippina in her fury had told Nero to his face that he owed the throne to her, and that if he did not return to his submission she would deprive him of it and give it to Britannicus. This was at the very beginning of January 55. On February 13th Britannicus would be fifteen and have passed out of childhood by the assumption of the *toga virilis*. Only a few days before, when in December the Saturnalia had been celebrated with much merriment in the palace, and the offices had been distributed by lot among the young people, Nero had been appointed king, and he had set Britannicus as a forfeit in the game to stand in the middle of the room and recite some verses. Britannicus did so, and the lines he chose were applicable to his own position as a prince thrust into the background and despoiled of his rights. His recitation had provoked applause and tokens of sympathy, and aroused the jealousy of Nero. Upon this came the threats of Agrippina, and they worked in his mind, and he resolved on the death of Britannicus.

As he could allege no crime against his half-brother, he dared not command his execution openly. Locusta the poisoner was still in custody, and the tribune Julius Pollio had charge of her. He entered into communication with the woman, and obtained from her a poison, which he induced the tutors of Britannicus to administer to their pupil. It failed in its effect. Thereupon Nero angrily rebuked the tribune and the poisoner with having played him false. Nero even beat the woman till she pleaded that she had given the dose in a small amount, so that the boy might not die suddenly and thus provoke suspicion. Further she promised, that if Nero desired it, a more deadly potion should be prepared. 'I am not afraid of the Julian law



FIG. 108.—BRITANNICUS. Statue in the Lateran.



(against poisoners),’ scoffed he. Accordingly, under his own eyes, in a room adjoining his bed-chamber, the deadly mixture was concocted. It was tried first on a goat. Its death-struggles lasted five hours. Too long for Nero. The poison was again submitted to the fire, and tried next on a pig that died on the spot. Nero was now satisfied. That evening at table the emperor sat with his mother and his wife. At another table were Britannicus and his friends. Britannicus asked for wine. The taster was handed a goblet and put it to his lips; it was scalding hot so that he touched it only, and then handed it to the prince. Britannicus declined it and asked to have the wine cooled; then the poison was dropped into the goblet with the water, and the lad without a thought of mistrust drained the cup. He fell from his stool in convulsions on the floor. Terror filled all present. Several, who did not understand that this was planned, retired. But others suspecting, if not knowing, that the death of the prince had been schemed, fixed their eyes on Nero, who, without rising from his pillow on which he lounged, and apparently indifferent to what had happened, said, ‘This is one of his usual epileptic fits, from which he has suffered from infancy.’

The dying prince was conveyed out of the dining-room, and after a brief silence the interrupted conversation was resumed. The alarm and horror of Agrippina, however, were so marked that it was clear to all that she was guiltless of the crime; whilst the wretched Octavia was forced to control every token of emotion at her brother’s condition and betray neither by swelling bosom nor trickling tear that she was stirred by grief or dismay.

That same night the body of the last male issue of the Claudian race was conveyed to the Field of Mars, there to be consumed with all haste. Purple spots had appeared on the body, and Nero had them chalked over, but as the corpse was being conveyed to its pyre the pouring rain washed off the white pigment and betrayed the tokens of crime. The people, driven from the streets by the floods that the Sirocco wind charged with moisture sent down, considered these rains as a token of divine vengeance. By an edict Nero justified the hurrying of the obsequies, alleging that it was an institution of his ancestors ‘to withdraw from sight the bodies of such as died prematurely, and not to lengthen the solemnity by encomiums and by processions.’

The estates of Britannicus which devolved to himself, Nero gave away freely to men of rank and position, only thereby deepening the suspicion entertained against himself of having caused his brother’s death.

About this time appeared the treatise by Seneca on Clemency, in which he praises the gentleness of the prince’s rule, and his abstention from acts of violence. The question forces itself on one’s attention: Did Seneca, in his desire to strengthen and secure the throne of his

pupil, sanction, if not instigate, the murder, or did he endeavour to disguise it when committed without his knowledge, or lastly—was any murder committed at all?

Now, in the first place, we see no evidence of Nero's position being in the least endangered by the younger prince. It is more than probable that Tacitus feigned the threat of Agrippina in order to give a plausibility to his tragic story of a crime which he felt was without motive. There is certainly no limit to the extravagance of threat to which a furious woman will launch out, but the very extravagance and absurdity of the threat of Agrippina, if ever made, deprived it of every element that could disquiet. She—the mother of the emperor—would present the son of the rival she had overthrown to the homage of the soldiery who were completely devoted to their commander, and that commander was her own son's minister of war and adviser! If the absurd threat were ever made, in the next moment of coolness Agrippina would herself acknowledge its absurdity.

The only other motive alleged was that Britannicus had, in the Saturnalian games, when playing forfeits, recited some lines that were thought to apply to his own condition! Verily, a notable reason for his destruction!

We must receive the stories of poison with the greatest mistrust. Any inexplicable death, or any death that was thought to be advantageous to some parties, was attributed to poison. In this instance, as in that of Claudius, two attempts are said to have been made, and in both the first attempt fails. Britannicus had been subject to epileptic fits from childhood, and his fall from table has all the appearance of having been what Nero said it was—one of his ordinary attacks. The story of the purple spots chalked over, and the rain washing them off so that the spectators in the dead of night in pouring rain could see them, arose, if true, from the fact that in falling from table, Britannicus bruised himself, and these bruises were disguised, and then revealed by the rain.

For four years after this Nero remained an amiable harmless prince; it is almost incredible that a lad only just aged eighteen—his birthday was in December and the death of Britannicus occurred in January—can have contrived and carried out with diabolical ingenuity such a hideous fratricide, and retained his composure through it, and then have relapsed into his amiability again. When, four or five years later, he became a matricide and a monster of iniquity, then he was accused also of the death of his brother, and all the details were given with a minuteness which it does not seem possible could have been arrived at had a crime been actually committed.

Seneca, moreover, must have been the most despicable of men had he written his treatise on Clemency with the knowledge that he whom he praised therein was stained with his brother's blood.

We may perhaps gain some notion of what the poisons of the old world were when we know what was esteemed as a sovereign antidote against them—this was the famous Mithridaticum, which had been discovered by Mithridates, king of Pontus, and was that wherewith he fortified himself against the subtle attempts of his enemies. The recipe was found among his papers by Cn. Pompeius, and is preserved for us by Pliny. It was fully believed in to the end of the Middle Ages. We are told that Agrippina secured herself against poison which she thought her son was having administered to her, and laughed at his attempts, because she took an antidote, and that doubtless was the Mithridaticum. Here is the recipe: ‘Take two dry walnuts, as many figs, and twenty dried leaves of rue, add a little salt, and take on an empty stomach. On the day this dose has been administered no poison can have any effect.’ This far-famed antidote is nothing more than a mild febrifuge.

We know how in the Middle Ages the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells whenever typhoid or typhus fever broke out. And when, in the times of the emperors, and before that, under the Republic, men and women perished by disorders the physicians did not understand, or could not cure, all was explained when the word poison was whispered.

In the matter of the death of Britannicus, the words of Dio are deserving of being weighed: ‘Men spread reports after their own evil fancies and demoralisation, and *asserted as true what was only possible, and as certain what was merely probable.*’

### III.—GROWING ESTRANGEMENT.

AFTER the death of Britannicus, Agrippina drew to her the slighted and lonely Octavia. Each had a grievance against Nero; each could complain of neglect. He, indeed, made presents to his mother of some of the villas that had belonged to Britannicus, ‘but her resentment was not to be abated by any acts of munificence. She attached herself more closely to Octavia, held frequent conferences with her confidants in secret; with more than her inherent avarice she scraped together money from every source, as if to form a reserve fund; she courteously entertained the tribunes and centurions, and honoured the names and virtues of the few nobles who remained, as if she were seeking a party and a leader to support her,’ so says Tacitus. That she should collect money was perhaps not marvellous, when Nero was throwing his about with both hands. The story is told of him, as it is also told of Antonius, that he had ordered a sum of two and a half million denarii to be given to his Greek secretary, Doryphorus. Agrippina, thinking the sum beyond all measure, spread it out on the table before him. ‘I did not think it was

so little,' said Nero, and ordered the treasurer to pay to the secretary double the amount.

That she seemed to be forming a party when she gathered her friends about her was an insinuation of her enemies. She had nothing to gain by the dethronement of her son.



FIG. 109.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Bust, Mus. Nat. Naples.

The empress-mother was still an important personage. Octavia had neither the ambition nor the power to assert herself. Hitherto Agrippina



had inhabited the palace along with her son and his wife, and there as a regent had held a court equal in splendour to that of Nero. Those who visited the palace paid their respects at once to the emperor and to his mother, and a detachment of the praetorians kept guard over her portion of the palace, as they had in the time of Claudius. In addition to this, Nero, on his accession, had granted her a company of Germans, to serve as a bodyguard.

Now Nero withdrew both the guard of honour and those who attended on her person, as a token that he mistrusted her influence with the soldiery. Then he ordered her to remove from his palace along with her servants and occupy the house that had been that of Antonia, her grandmother.

‘Of all human things,’ says Tacitus on this occasion, ‘none is so unstable and transitory as the reputation of influence which depends not on its own inherent strength.’ This Agrippina now experienced. None now visited her; none condoled with her, save a few ladies who were warmly attached to her, and others who went to glut their hate by the sight of her fall. Amongst those who still visited her was Junia Silana, who, at the instigation of Messalina, had been divorced by Caius Silius. Fate had driven her into the arms of Agrippina, and together they had rejoiced over the destruction of Messalina. Since then the two women had remained on most affectionate terms. An unfortunate matter now separated them. Junia Silana was wealthy—the heiress of her father—and in her time had been beautiful, but was now withered. Scandal said that her morals had been of the worst. Suddenly it was announced that the old lady was about to give her hand to a young Roman noble, Sentius Africanus. Agrippina thought it incumbent on her to interfere, and naturally the meanest motives were attributed to her for her interference. It was said that she coveted the estates of her friend, who was childless. How she could have laid claim to them on her death is by no means clear, as they were not related. She invited the young man to her and advised him in private not to marry an old woman with ugly tales clinging to her name. Africanus withdrew his suit, and from that moment Silana became the deadly enemy of her former ally, and waited her opportunity to repay her.

This opportunity now offered. Agrippina was in disfavour; she was no more to be feared for her power; her estrangement from her son was growing, and was the common talk of Rome. To revenge herself for having been bereft of her young suitor, Junia Silana suborned two of her clients, Iturius and Calvisius, to accuse the empress-mother of high-treason. Another person was drawn into the plot, Domitia Lepida, sister to Agrippina’s first husband, that avaricious old lady of whom it was said she did not sell her old shoes, for she wore only such as were bought at second-hand. She had been divorced from Crispus Passienus, and he had been Agrippina’s second husband. Domitia

therefore had an old grudge to avenge, and she threw herself heartily into the scheme.

Among the few remaining kinsmen of the ruling Julian house was Rubellius Plautus, son of Rubellius Blandus, to whom the Emperor Tiberius had given the princess Julia, daughter of his son Drusus. Consequently he was related on his mother's side to the Claudian, but not by blood to the Julian family. When Tacitus says that he was, he means that he might claim Augustus as an ancestor through the adoption of Tiberius into the Julian house. The story got up by the two rancorous old women was that Agrippina had planned the dethronement of her own son, and the elevation of Rubellius Plautus in his room, and that she purposed to secure his right by marrying him. Rubellius cannot have been more than a couple of years older than Nero, consequently the stab meditated by Junia Silana was a return in kind to that dealt her by Agrippina. She—an old woman—was meditating union with a youth. A freedman of Domitia, a dancer and jester named Paris, who stood in high favour with Nero, was engaged by the chamberlain of Domitia to use his best pantomimic arts to frighten Nero into belief that his throne was jeopardised.

It was late at night. Nero sat at table in his palace, where the company, flushed with wine, had protracted their revels. On the entrance of the favourite buffoon, who on such occasions was wont to spice the entertainment with his comic sayings and grotesque actions, the emperor was surprised to see that his fun had gone from him, and that he appeared agitated. On inquiry as to the reason, he learnt to his alarm that a conspiracy had been formed against him by his own mother. In the first impulse of fear, he issued orders for the immediate execution of Agrippina and of Rubellius Plautus. As he doubted whether Burrhus might not be in the plot, for he enjoyed the command of the praetorians through Agrippina, he transferred the command to Caecina Tuscus, son of his nurse. Then Seneca interfered: he allayed the alarm of the young half-tipsy prince, and made him withdraw his transfer of the command of the guards from Burrhus. The old soldier was hastily summoned to the palace. The Emperor at once informed him of the charges, and urged him to take the necessary precautions for his safety and for the punishment of the conspirators. Burrhus sought to mitigate his terrors, and succeeded so far as to obtain a postponement of the executions, but only on solemnly undertaking to decapitate the empress-mother if she were found to be really guilty. The honourable old soldier went further. He pointed out to the still frightened Nero: 'To every one liberty of defence is accorded, and this should certainly not be denied to a mother. No proper accusers have appeared,' he said; 'the only evidence we have is the assertion of one man who came from the house of a bitter enemy of the accused, and the charge was made in the midst of the night when all present

were in a condition of recklessness or maudlin stupidity, and therefore the charge was most suspicious.' Nero consented to wait till morning, and he committed the investigation to Burrhus.

Accordingly, early next day the commander of the guards betook himself to the palace of the empress-mother, and laid before her the commands of her son. He had summoned Seneca and several of the imperial freedmen to be present, that they might be witnesses of the investigation. Burrhus informed the astonished Agrippina of the nature of the accusation brought against her, named the accusers, and spoke in a peremptory and threatening tone.

The defence made by Agrippina, given to us by Tacitus, is a masterpiece of proud eloquence, and if not altogether genuine, is composed by the historian in perfect accord with her character. As, however, it is quite certain that Burrhus and Seneca would have had shorthand writers with them, it is not improbable that Tacitus took it from the official records. Agrippina, with her wonted haughtiness, answered: 'I wonder not that Silana, who never bore a child, should be a stranger to a mother's love for her son. In good truth, children are not so easily plucked out of the heart of a parent as a lover out of that of a loose woman. As for Iturius and Calvisius, they are bankrupts, and as a last resource, by undertaking this prosecution, pay back to an old woman their services, as an equivalent for the money with which she had furnished them in times past. Is it by such as these that I am to be branded with infamy, and that Caesar is brought to conceive the possibility of slaying his mother? As to Domitia, I would thank her for all the sallies of her hate, if she strove to outdo me in kindness to my boy, Nero. Now, through Atimetus, her minion, and the merry-andrew, Paris, she is framing a farce fit for the stage. Where was she, when I by my counsels obtained the adoption of her nephew and my son into the Claudian house? when I procured for him the proconsular authority and his designation to the consulship? when I advanced his cause in every way necessary for getting him the empire? Where was she, I ask? Admiring her fish-ponds at Baiae. Say—is there a man who can stand forward and charge me with practising on the guards in Rome, with tampering with the allegiance of the provinces, with luring the slaves and freedmen of the prince into treasonable practices? If Plautus or any other man were to gain supreme power, I would be the first to be brought up for judgment. When screened by my son, I am still foully charged, not with expressions that have slipped off my tongue from the vehemence of my love for him, but with all sorts of crimes.'

Her towering wrath at the falseness of the charges laid against her, her innate queenliness of aspect and of manner, powerfully affected all who heard her, and they strove to allay her panting indignation by promising that she should be brought into the presence of her son.

Her interview with Nero was characteristic of this proud and pas-

sionate woman. She would not stoop by one word to exculpate herself. In face of her son she demanded as a right the condemnation of her false accusers, and the reward of those who had stood by her. Both were granted her. The treacherous Silana was banished, Iturius and Calvisius were relegated.<sup>1</sup> Atimetus, the chamberlain, was executed; but the favour of the emperor preserved Paris, only to fall a victim to his cruelty nine years later. The head of the imaginary plot, Rubellius Plautus, remained unmolested. Three Roman knights were rewarded for their devotion to the empress-mother by being given governorships.

The ill fate that had attended this attempt to destroy Agrippina did not discourage another of her enemies from making a similar attempt, not indeed directly against herself, but against the once all-powerful Pallas, and the brave captain of the guards, whose intervention had saved her life in the case just related.

There was a Roman knight named Paetus, a man of the worst character, whose business it was to buy up the estates of such as had been condemned, and parcel them out and resell them in small allotments. He also raked up old debts to the treasury, and delated those who were debtors for the sake of the reward given on such occasions.

This Paetus charged Pallas and Burrhus with having formed a plan to place on the throne Cornelius Sulla, the husband of Antonia, eldest daughter of Claudius. He reckoned on the dislike Nero had for Pallas, whose colossal fortune moreover might tempt him, and on the mistrust that might have been aroused against Burrhus by his defence of Agrippina in the former accusation. But the case was manifestly false, and Nero at this time was by no means the tyrant he afterwards became. He himself required Burrhus, though accused, to take his place among the judges; Pallas was at once acquitted, and on this occasion his discretion in never having any communication with an underling except in writing stood him in good stead. Not a line of his could be produced to lend colour to the accusation of treason. Seneca pleaded the cause of the accused, and the delator was banished. Pallas survived his patroness, and died at an advanced age in A.D. 62, leaving a fortune of three hundred million sesterces (over £3,150,000), and was buried on the Tiburtine Way, on which, half a century later, the younger Pliny read the inscription that recorded the grant to him by the senate of praetorian insignia, and his decline of a further grant of money. Over this Pliny fanned himself into a fury of disgust at the baseness of the Roman senate that could decree such honours to a man of servile origin.

Sulla was acquitted; but a germ of mistrust remained in the heart of Nero, and in A.D. 57 he banished him to Marseilles on hearing rumours of fresh conspiracies of which Sulla was the head. He was a

<sup>1</sup> The sentence was one of mitigated banishment. The relegated were not deprived of their rights as citizens, which were lost by the exiled whilst in banishment.



dull, cold man, and not wealthy; but Nero thought that his stupidity and lack of geniality were affected. Five years later he was put to death by order of Nero.

At this time the prince had not taken any step in a direction towards cruelty. He sought the approval of the public by acts of justice and liberality. For instance, the despicable wretch, P. Suilius, who had been employed largely by Messalina as an accuser, and had caused the death of many innocent men, was now relegated to the Balearic Isles. He moreover reduced a number of burdensome charges on the people.

Probably to the period when he was one-and-twenty belongs the colossal bust in the Capitol that represents him without a beard. He rapidly attained the look and gait of a man. Somewhat later he grew a beard, then he shaved.

The bust in the Capitoline Museum, No. 15, in the room of the emperors, was placed on a statue that has been lost. It represents him as already showing signs of fatness, and with the beginning of a double chin. The hair is long and wavy, and falls down over his brow. Only the tip of the nose has been restored. It is of Luna marble, and is of good workmanship.

There is also a bust of Nero belonging to this period that was found on the Palatine. It is chiefly curious as being almost the only ancient bust which represents a man with whiskers and shaved chin. There is another in the Museum at Naples, but not of Nero.

#### IV.—POPPEA SABINA.

ALTHOUGH there existed estrangement between mother and son, yet her influence over him held him in check, and he did not proceed, as he had proposed, to divorce Octavia and marry Acte. Agrippina took care that the timid, retiring young empress should be seen by the people, and her sweet and modest character won their respect and even love.

For three or four years Acte maintained her hold on the heart of Nero, but had then to make way for a woman who exercised a terrible influence over the young prince, and thrust him on to the commission of his worst crimes.

A. U. C. 811.  
A. D. 58.  
Act. 21.

This woman was the daughter of Titus Ollius, who had been involved in the condemnation of the friends and favourites of Sejanus. Her mother was a daughter of C. Poppaeus Sabinus, who as governor of Moesia, Achaia, and Macedonia in the last years of Tiberius, had amassed a large fortune. The political career of T. Ollius had been cut short at the time when he acquired the office of quaestor; after his death, Poppaea the Elder had married a Scipio, and was considered to be one of the most beautiful women in Rome, as also one of the lightest. Her gallantries had brought about a quarrel with Messalina. She had

been engaged in the fall of Valerius Asiaticus, and had been forced by Messalina to put herself to death. From this mother, Poppaea Sabina inherited not only her transcendent beauty, but also the laxity of her principles. 'This woman,' says Tacitus, 'possessed everything but an honest mind; from her mother, who in beauty surpassed all women of her time, she derived the charms of her person and the dignity of her family; her wealth was equal to the lustre of her birth; she had a fascinating conversation, and was not deficient in wit. She observed an outward decorum, but in heart was wanton; she rarely appeared in public, and when she did she wore a veil, either because she did not want to glut eyes with her beauty, or because she thought a veil became her.'

She had been married to a Roman knight, Rufus Crispinus, to whom she had borne a son, but she was divorced from him, and then married M. Salvius Otho, the friend and confidant of the emperor.

The pains which she devoted to the preservation of her beauty by all kinds of artistic and dietetic means, the recklessness wherewith she spent her money on whatever might serve to gratify her love of splendour, were the talk of the town; and long after her death the tale went round how that on a journey she took about with her five hundred she-asses, that she might not miss her daily bath in warm asses' milk, as also that her mules were shod with gold. Also that when one day her mirror informed her that her beauty was on the decline, she had cried out: 'Let me die rather than lose my loveliness!'

Her hair was remarkable. It was of the colour of golden amber, and Nero composed verses on it. It was the envy of the Roman ladies, and set a fashion for ornaments in amber.

Otho, whom she took for her husband, was well known in Rome for his extravagance, and belonged to the *jeunesse dorée* of the capital. He had ingratiated himself with Agrippina during the reign of Claudius, by paying his addresses to one of her ladies-in-waiting, although she was of over-ripe charms. By this means he got into the court and into association with Nero, with whom he became as one in heart and soul, from the similarity of their characters and tastes, though Otho was his senior by five years. Unhappily, Otho was the prince's guide into worse things than scuffles with watchmen, and potations in low public-houses; and Nero looked up to him as a fellow who had wide experiences in the mode of enjoying life. Even the extravagance of Otho imposed on the boy, who was a novice in such matters, as neither his mother nor Claudius had cared for display, each being averse to waste. One day Nero squirted some drops of a costly essence over his friend, whereupon Otho invited him to dine at his palace on the following evening, when the same essence was discharged over all the guests at table through gold and silver pipes. What his audacity was may be gathered from an anecdote told of him, that once to strengthen an

assertion he made, he added : ' As certainly as that I shall be emperor.' ' I shall not even see you consul,' answered Nero.

Such a man suited Poppaea. Not that she was attracted by his appearance, for Otho was not handsome, he was short of stature, bandy-legged and splayfooted. At twenty-six he was bald and constrained to wear a wig, and he had no hair on his face. But he was vastly rich. His palace was crowded with treasures of art ; he was the intimate friend of the emperor, and Poppaea had already resolved to use him as a stepping-stone to help her to a throne.

Among all the treasures collected in his courts his wife was the choicest, thought Otho, and when his tongue was relaxed by wine, he dilated to his friends on her beauty.

Nero was twenty-one and the world lay at his feet. He was resolved to become the possessor of this incomparable woman.

Only after long hesitation and continued evasion did Otho allow Nero a sight of his wife. Her radiant loveliness, her demoniacal coquetry took the heart of the young prince at once by storm. But Poppaea would not listen to his protests of affection. She was a married woman, she said, and loved her husband. Nero sent his servants to her, to invite her to his palace. They were not even admitted to her presence. The emperor came himself, and asked permission to make his invitation in person. But the doors remained shut, and Nero was forced to withdraw, baffled, but all the more inflamed. Then he despatched Otho as governor into Lusitania, and hoped in his absence to win the beauty. But Poppaea remained inexorable. She would be empress or naught. Repelled, dissatisfied, and glowing with passion, the young prince resolved to clear all impediments out of his way that withheld from him the object of his ardour.

The chief of these was Agrippina. Though he had deprived his mother of all interference in the affairs of State, her presence was a moral check upon his conduct, her gravity and disapproval of his frivolity a continual vexation. He had threatened, in a huff, to abdicate and retire to Rhodes. Now she stood in the way of his passion. She had been constrained to tolerate his attachment to Acte, but she resisted this new passion with all the means at her disposal. She knew of what sort was the woman who was angling so deftly for her son. And she knew also that she herself, and she alone, was the protector of Octavia.

The time was long past since he had given as watchword to the praetorians, ' The best of mothers.' He had already withdrawn the guard from her and relegated her to the palace of Antonia. He either did not visit her at all, or, if he did pay her a visit of courtesy, he filled the room with his centurions, and gave her no opportunity to reprimand him in private.

Nero had been wont, when she took the air in her litter, to accompany

it on foot; he never attended her now, and when she retired to her Tusculan or Antian villas, he sneeringly hoped that she would there find the repose for her troubled spirit that it so much needed. But he was not content with her absence; he molested her in the most coarse manner. When she was in the country, he sent people to pass and repass her villa, by road and by water, and to yell under her windows the most brutal insults, and to disturb her sleep with cat-calls. When she was in Rome he worried her by lawsuits, and accusations before the courts.

Poppaea knew that so long as Agrippina lived she would never obtain the object of her ambition. She therefore directed all her artillery against the empress-mother. She was unwearied in declaring to Nero that his throne was insecure so long as that ambitious and revengeful woman lived, that his submission to his mother was unworthy of his position. She turned all her natural wit to make Agrippina ridiculous in his eyes, and to make Nero blush that he had ever been dutiful, and was still respectful; now fanning his vanity and then his fears. She told him he was still an infant under the tutelage of his mother. 'You call yourself an emperor,' scoffed she, 'you who are not yet a free man? Were you really emperor, you would not be putting off and off our projected marriage. What! am I not beautiful, not noble enough to be your consort? Is it an objection that I have proved my fertility? or that I am devoted in heart to you? Are you afraid lest, when I am your wife, I shall expose to you how contumeliously she has treated the senate? how great is the indignation of the people against her? Let me go to the other end of the world—send me to Otho, where, afar off, I may hear of, not see, the degradation of Nero.'

The weak mind of the prince yielded to the tears and eloquence of this vile woman. 'He felt,' says Tacitus, 'as though his mother, wherever she might be, was a nightmare to him, and he resolved to kill her.'

Unhappily, Nero was surrounded by a party bitterly opposed to Agrippina, and they humoured his mood, never, perhaps, for a moment dreaming that he would proceed to actual violence; but would content himself with banishing her.

Agrippina had now no guards to protect her against the insults to which she was subjected, she had few friends who in the courts dared to stand up and defend her cause. One may imagine the despair of the proud woman, who knew but too well to whom she must attribute the humiliations to which she was now subjected. It is possible that in her indignation she may have launched forth into unconsidered expressions of reproach against the ungrateful son, and of threat against the beautiful coquette who was winding him round her finger. If so, such expressions were at once carried to the ears of Nero and



Poppaea, and those who flattered them knew how to inflame their animosity and deepen their dread of this stately and still powerful woman.

Powerful she still was—that is shown us by the resolution at which Nero and Poppaea arrived to get rid of her. All the moral strength of the old Roman character that lingered on among the upper classes of Rome held with her. They had measured the ineptitude of the new ruler, and knew that he would become the ball in the hands of such persons as could get hold of him. Under the late emperor the freedmen had held the reins of government, now they were likely to be snatched at by the dissolute youth of the circle that drank, and danced, and brawled with the shallow-pated boy who was prince. What guarantee was there that the control of affairs should remain with Burrhus and Seneca? Even these men, though opposed to the interference of Agrippina, respected her, and knew how important she was as the sole person who could hold Nero in restraint. That was why, when she was assailed, they ranged themselves on her side.

But Poppaea now had recourse to slander of the most repulsive nature, so as to alienate minds from Agrippina, for it is to this time that belongs the vile story recorded by Tacitus, Suetonius, Dio, Aurelius Victor, and alluded to also by Lucan.<sup>1</sup>

Have we got genuine portraits of Poppaea? Unfortunately, the medals do not help us greatly. The best is a Greek coin with Nero on the obverse. Her head on the reverse represents her with straight brow and nose almost in a line, after the Greek ideal type, a long neck, abundant hair that falls in a plat at the nape of her neck, with two tresses drawn forward, one on each side of her throat. But the portrait of Nero on this coin is not good, and we have little reason to suppose that the other likeness is better as a portrait. Moreover, it differs in profile from a small coin on which Nero and Poppaea are represented together.

<sup>1</sup> The calumny was as preposterous as it was false. The empress was forty-two. The purpose of the slander was obvious enough :—to hold her up to popular contempt, and to check Nero from visiting her. It is in direct contradiction with what is known of the conduct towards her of Nero at the time, who rarely saw her, and never visited her without being surrounded by his centurions. How the story originated is not hard to discover. Among the light women about the court of Nero was one, say Suetonius and Dio, curiously like Agrippina in the days of her youth and beauty. The stories of the misconduct of this girl were dexterously attached to the poor old lady by Poppaea, to serve her own ends. Tacitus says that he does not vouch for the truth of the reports ; Dio Cassius frankly admits that he knew no certainty about it. The allusion of the contemporary Lucan is in the *Pharsalia*, viii. 406-410.

<sup>2</sup> It is with repugnance that we mark not only writers such as Suetonius and men of his kidney, but also Tacitus, dwell on this disgusting theme with a certain pleasure, and turn it over and over ; but indeed scandalous stories of this sort were those for which the public, for whom they catered, had most taste. However, if in this matter we may with clear conscience absolve the mother of Nero from these horrible reports spread by her contemporaries, yet we must not forget that she was reaping like measure to that which she had dealt to others in her Memoirs.—Stahr, *Agrippina*, p. 247.

In the basement of the Capitoline Museum are two medallions, in white marble (Stanza III. Nos. 15 and 17), one of which represents Nero, and the other in all probability is Poppaea. She is shown in profile with a rather long nose, somewhat in the line of brow, like the medal, and with the lips parted. The hair, however, is gathered up and woven about her head as a crown, much in the same way as in the famous seated Agrippina in the floor above.

Of the origin of these medallions I know nothing, but the fashion in which the hair is worn indicates a later date—that of the Faustinas. The medallions were suspected by Winckelmann to be Renaissance sculpture.

Precisely similar is the way in which the hair is worn on the bust attributed to Poppaea in the Room of the Emperors. There remain on this bust small bronze pegs, to which a metal diadem was formerly attached. It was, therefore, almost certainly the portrait of an empress, and it is unlike any other empress we know. The greater part of the nose is restored. It was found near S. Lorenzo fuori le Mura.

Failing information relative to the medallions, we are left to conjecture. If those medallions could be determined to be genuine antiques, the difficulty would disappear, as the change of headgear is perhaps by no means so certainly indicative of a later date as Bernoulli supposes. The twisting of a plait round the head is a natural way of utilising the hair for adornment. The so-called Poppaea in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence is a very inferior piece of sculpture. The eyes are large, remarkably so, and the hair is of the period of the Agrippinas, major and minor. But the nose is entirely new, and the attribution to Poppaea is purely conjectural.

Of Otho, the husband, a good many genuine portrait-busts remain. He was sincerely attached to his wife; and to have to resign her to Nero was to him a bitter grief, but he brought it on himself by his own folly. According to general opinion, the marriage of Poppaea with Otho was a mere formality, the emperor having already set his heart on her. But this does not appear to have been the case. Otho was furiously jealous, 'he loved her so extravagantly that he could not with patience endure Nero as his rival,' says Suetonius; nevertheless, the other view was condensed into a smart epigram on the banishment of Otho to Lusitania, and circulated in Rome.<sup>1</sup> For ten years he remained away, and when he finally was elevated for a few months to the throne, one of his first acts was to restore the statues of Poppaea that had been thrown down after the fall of Nero. The busts of Otho that we have nearly all belong to a later period than that of which we treat. He seems

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus gives two versions of the early relation of Nero to Poppaea and Otho. It is best to follow that in the *Annals* which was written subsequently to the *Histories*. It is probable that he had acquired information which led him to alter his opinion as expressed in the first of these works that he composed.

to have affected to imitate Nero in his appearance. He was an exquisite of the period. He shaved daily, and rubbed his face with bread sops. According to Suetonius, his main reason for uniting with Galba for the overthrow of Nero was resentment for having been robbed by the tyrant of his wife. He showed himself in Lusitania to be a good governor, and his end on the field of Bedriacum was full of dignity. He committed suicide to save further effusion of blood in civil war.

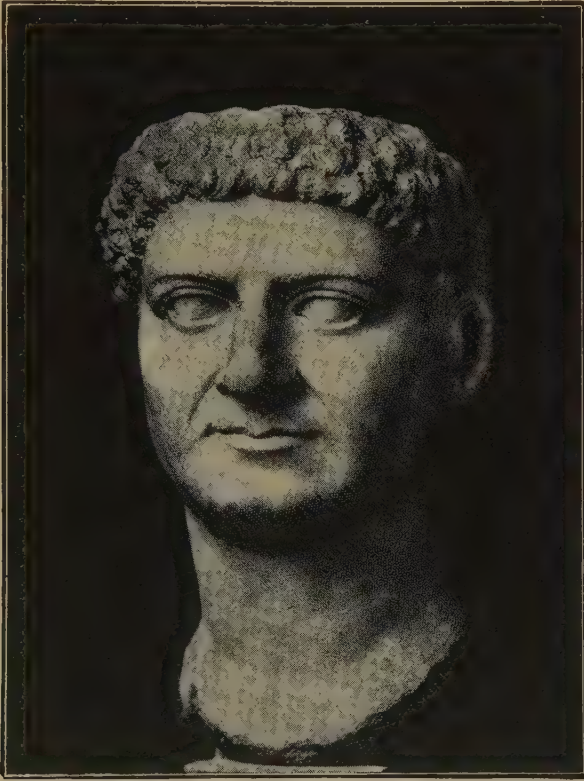


FIG. 110.—OTHO. Bust in the British Museum.

One of the finest busts of Otho that exists is in the British Museum. In this, as in all others, the wig is distinguishable. It shows the man at his best, firm of mouth, and with a fairly massive brow.

In the Uffizi is one of him as an effeminate dandy. M. Major says, 'He has a feminine look, and is of a regular and gentle beauty. In his face is a weary expression.' But this flatters. Otho was a plain man.

Another is in the Capitoline Museum. 'The Uffizi bust shows him effeminate, his eyes floating in a dream. This one shows us the man

of character looking death in the face. In fact, the two are very unlike, only the coiffure is the same. This one seems to us the most real as a portrait. The eye looks into the distance; the mouth is fleshy, but not so plump; the nose less *banale*ment *regulier*.'

In the Hall of Busts at the Vatican are two, Nos. 278 and 307; one in the Torlonia Gallery, No. 534, the hair of the wig only indicated, so that probably a helmet covered the head. The bust is in military cuirass and chlamys. A youthful bust is in the Louvre, No. 2408.

#### V.—THE DEATH OF AGRIPPINA.

WE have reached the turning-point in the career of Nero. We may absolve him of the death of Britannicus. Hitherto he had committed no murderous crimes, but he had been crossed by no one in his pursuit of pleasure. Now that he was really a man, and wore a beard, and had lost the shrill pipe of boyhood, he found his mother stand between him and the object of his pursuit, she defending his young and innocent wife, and waving him back from the course of vice into which he was precipitating himself. His hesitation was not long. Two impediments must be removed. As long as his mother stood before Octavia he could not repudiate her; till Octavia was divorced he could not marry Poppaea. This latter designing woman, probably older than Nero, had succeeded in thoroughly imbuing his feeble mind with the conviction that his seat on the throne was insecure so long as Agrippina lived, that care for his own safety demanded the removal of his mother. He had formed his resolve in the spring of A.D. 59. The only question with him was how the deed was to be done. The domestics of Agrippina were so warmly attached to her that he recognised the impossibility of tampering with them. Poison he mistrusted; it was reported that she took the Mithridaticum every morning. 'How to despatch her with the sword, and yet conceal the deed, no one could suggest; he feared, moreover, lest the person selected for the perpetration of so heinous an act should disregard his orders.' Anicetus, an enfranchised slave, tutor to Nero in his infancy, but now admiral of the fleet at Misenum, hated by and hating Agrippina, here proffered the aid of his ingenuity. He was a skilful mechanician.

Agrippina had given orders for some repairs to be done to one of her villas, and means of access to it were obtained whilst the workmen were engaged on it. Over her bed, which must have been a sort of four-poster, was a heavy top. The supports were sawn through, and it was contrived that when she got into bed it should fall on and crush her. But she was forewarned that some mischief was intended, and she escaped the danger.

It happened that Nero attended a theatrical performance at which



a ship had appeared on the stage, that suddenly opened in the middle, discharged a number of wild beasts, and then closed again. The idea immediately occurred to him that he might contrive the death of his



FIG. III.—AGRIPPINA MINOR. Statue at Naples.

mother by similar means, and he communicated his idea to Anicetus, who at once undertook to execute the design. 'Such a vessel,' said he, 'as may fall to pieces and plunge her unawares in the water, is easily made.

Nothing is more common than accidents at sea, and if she be thus lost by shipwreck, who will say that she perished by human contrivance, and not by the chance of winds and waves? When once she is dead, let the prince erect a temple and altars to the deceased, and parade his filial reverence, and no one will entertain suspicions that she came to her end by foul means.'

Nero was satisfied; Anicetus received orders to build the vessel; Nero was to find an opportunity for enticing his mother on to it.

That opportunity soon came. At the beginning of March Nero went to Baiae to attend the great feast of Minerva that began on the 19th and lasted five days. He had taken care to spread beforehand the report of an intended reconciliation with his mother. He repeated several times in public the assurance that the estrangement caused him pain, that he regretted his conduct towards her, and would take the occasion of the festival for cementing their old relations again. 'It was true,' he said, 'that she had a hasty temper, but it was his duty to humour it, as she was his parent; and he would soothe her ruffled spirits.' He calculated that what he said would be wafted to her ears, and he knew that her tender mother's heart would at once gush with love and forgiveness towards him.

He played his part admirably, and he succeeded completely in allaying the suspicions of Agrippina, and that she entertained some, we are assured; she had been admonished to be on her guard. But when Nero wrote to her with his own hand in cheerful and affectionate terms, inviting her to associate herself with him in the great Quinquatrian festival at Baiae, her mistrust vanished like smoke. His letter found her at Antium, in her favourite villa, where twenty-two years before she had borne her son. The remembrance of this helped to melt her heart, never really steeled against her child. Her talking thrush said no word of warning as she left her gardens and descended to the little haven below where her Liburnian galley was at anchor.

'Whoever has, once in his life, had the felicity to see the incomparable loveliness of heaven, earth, and sea in the Gulf of Baiae on a smiling spring day, will readily understand why the lord of the world chose this enchanting nook as his favourite resort at the time of the spring festival, for, as Horace sang—

"No gulf on earth outshines the charming Baiae."

Even now, nigh on two thousand years after these events, the wanderer who makes the circuit of the bay from Solfatara to Pozzuoli and Baiae, and from Centi Camerelle to the so-called Sepolcro di Agrippina, will find the whole coast covered with countless ruins of splendid edifices of all kinds, of villas and temples, theatres and summer-houses, destroyed by earthquakes and flames, or by the vandalism of barbaric ages, —remains that, even in their crumbled condition, bear testimony to a

splendour and beauty scarcely paralleled in these days anywhere. The very name of Baiae, the most famous and luxurious of all bathing resorts of the Roman world, contained in itself, as countless notices of the ancients inform us, the expression of all the joy and the magnificence of the antique world. The heights covered with green woods, folding round the town which faces the south, were crowned with the ancient castle-like country houses of the rich and noble of the closing epoch of Republican Rome; thence Marius, Pompeius, and Caesar had once looked down on the life of the baths. Since then, countless villas and gay palaces had crowded the shore, indeed had invaded the sea itself, sustained on vast substructures, converting the entire beach into one ring of pleasure resorts, showing like a fairy scene to those who approached by sea from Rome, and had doubled the Cape of Misenum, covered with its fragrant gardens full of exotics. In the depth of this great bay that began at Misenum, lay first the bathing and harbour town of Baiae; then within another depression that shining town of villas, Bauli, not far off the Lucrine and Avernian lakes, the former divided from the sea by an embankment eight stadia long, and wide enough to serve for driving over, erected by Marcus Agrippa, the grandfather of Agrippina; opposite Baiae was the town of Puteoli, with its marble temple of Serapis, one of the most magnificent monuments of Graeco-Roman architecture, and one whose mighty pillars attract the attention of travellers at the present day.<sup>1</sup>

The remains of the villa of Nero are thought to be at the headland of Baiae, where hot springs still rise and fill the vaults with vapour. Agrippina herself had a villa in the Elysian Fields, near the little harbour of Bauli, with the Monte di Procida at its back.

When Agrippina's Liburnian turned the headland of Misenum, she saw the imperial galley approach to welcome her and accompany her to the landing-place at Bauli. Her son descended from his vessel and greeted his mother with clasp of hand and kiss. Here a surprise awaited her. Among the vessels at anchor in the little bay was a splendid galley, gilded and with silken sails, which Nero presented to her along with its company of sailors and military guard. It was as proud as well as happy moment for the Empress who had been humbled by the withdrawal of sentinels and escort. Now, in token of reconciliation, the guard was restored. Before Nero left her, to return to Baiae, to allow her time to rest after her voyage, he invited her to a banquet that was to take place that same evening in honour of her arrival and as a pledge of their reconciliation. The intimate comrade of the emperor, Otho, not yet sent to Lusitania, was to give the feast.<sup>2</sup> Dissolute as Otho was, we cannot believe that he was privy to the infamous design on the life of Agrippina—which was to pave the way for his own removal and the loss of his wife. It is more probable

<sup>1</sup> Stahr., *Agrippina*.

<sup>2</sup> Suet., *Otho* 3.

that he was pleased at the proposed reconciliation, and hoped that the influence of Agrippina would now again be strong enough to withhold his friend from robbing him of his passionately loved Poppaea.

Agrippina accepted the invitation.

When she was at the point of departure, she was told that her Liburnian that had conveyed her from Antium had been run into by one of the vessels in the bay, and was too seriously injured to receive her on board. For a moment she hesitated. It was afterwards sup-



FIG. 112.—AGRIPPINA, MINOR. Head of the seated statue at Naples.

posed that she then suspected some evil ; but this is not likely. She was in doubt whether to go to Baiae in the new ship given her by Nero, or by land. The distance was inconsiderable. Delay would be occasioned by ordering the galley to be made ready, and she elected to be conveyed in her litter to the villa of Otho at Baiae.

On reaching her destination, the host and all the guests received Agrippina with tokens of respect the most profound, and signs of satisfaction at the reconciliation, probably sincere.

At table she occupied the place of honour by the emperor. ‘So it be-



hoved her,' said he, 'to whom he owed his life and his elevation;' and he seemed in his most cheerful mood, and to be full of his old childish affection for her. Throughout the evening he paid attention to none other. With his coaxing words, his caresses, and then with serious talk about matters of state in which he sought her advice, Agrippina felt her heart relieved from all the shadows and sorrows that had clouded and soured it. It seemed to her that the old days had returned again, in which Nero was her dutiful and tender son, and that now she would recover some of her former authority and majesty. The wine she drank, the amber (*fusca*) Falernian, from the vineyards hard by, dark as brown sherry with old age<sup>1</sup> served to warm still further her fond and pleased spirit, and she did not remark that the banquet had been protracted beyond the wonted hour, deep into the night. At last, about midnight, she rose and gave the signal for departure. She intended to return in her litter as she had come, but it was announced to her that the state galley placed at her disposal by the emperor was awaiting her at the landing-place below the villa, and she was easily persuaded to avail herself of the convoy given her by her dear son, and dismiss all her own attendants except one man and her favourite maid.

When Nero bade her farewell, as she stepped on board the vessel contrived for her destruction, the full force of this awful moment weighed on him, as he said to himself that he saw for the last time the mother who had borne him, and had nursed him on her knees, and stilled his infant sorrows at her bosom; and that he was sending her to death, unconscious of what awaited her, with her heart full of tears of happiness at being again united to the son who occupied all her thoughts and engrossed all her love. But he had broken down every bridge behind him, he could not go back from his purpose even if he willed it. This feeling overcame him. He clasped her passionately to his heart, and looked long and steadily into her eyes, which were so soon to close in death. He covered her hands, her bosom with his kisses. Then he handed her over to his admiral, that Anicetus who had contrived the treacherous vessel, and was there to see that it did not fail in its object, and who, finding that she had gone by land from Bauli, followed her by sea as her evil fate.

The night was warm, still, and dark, no moon shone, but the sky was thick sown with countless stars, as Agrippina, doomed to death, started in the galley, attended by one of her own men only, Gallus, who stood by the steersman, and by her maid, Aceronia Pollia, who lay at the feet of her mistress in the deck-cabin which was covered by a sort of roof. There the happy lady rested on a sofa, whilst Aceronia talked to her on the topic that filled the thoughts of her mistress, the regret of Nero for his unkindness in the past, and resolve to compensate for it by greater filial piety in the future.

<sup>1</sup> *Candida nigrescant vetulo crystallæ Falerno.*—MARTIAL.

'The gods, as if to bring damning testimony against the impious deed, granted a night lit with stars,' says Tacitus, 'while not a breath disturbed the unruffled deep.' The beak of the vessel was directed northwards, and the water flashed luminous over the oars as they rose out of the dark tide. Suddenly a mysterious signal rang through the stillness of the night, and with a crash the hood of the cabin weighted with lead fell upon the three victims. Gallus, who was standing, was struck down and killed, but the sides of the sofa held up the weight that had fallen, and protected the ladies. Then followed a scene of indescribable confusion. Apparently the mechanism of the ship was so contrived that the fall of the roof of her cabin should set the rest of the machinery in action, which would make the vessel part and precipitate those under this roof into the sea. But the sofa had interfered with the proper working of the mechanism, and the contrivance failed. Only some of those on board had been let into the secret, and these used their best endeavours to wreck the galley by running to one side; but either they did not act sufficiently in concert, or they were hindered by the counter efforts of those not initiated into the intentions of their admiral, for all that the former could effect was to make the vessel so lurch that Agrippina and Aceronia slipped into the water or were thrust overboard as they worked their way from under the fallen roof. Aceronia, clinging to the side, forgetting in her fear for her own life her duty to her mistress, shrieked out, 'Save me! save me! I am the emperor's mother!' At once she was struck at with marlinespikes, and sank.

Agrippina, from whom attention was withdrawn, remained silent, and escaped the blows of the murderers, though receiving a wound on her shoulder, which interfered with her swimming, as she struck out. Her powers were failing her when unexpected help arrived. A couple of fishing boats were out that night as they often are nowadays, their masters engaged in nocturnal fishing. They came to the aid of the exhausted swimmer and lifted her into one of the boats. She was conveyed, at her command, to the Lucrine lake, the oars of the rowers, may be, dispersing the roses that were strewn in thousands on festal occasions over its still, bright waters,<sup>1</sup> and in this blessed region roses bloomed all the year. Agrippina had a villa on the shore of this lake, and she sent for a litter and was conveyed hastily into it. On her way she had time to think over what had happened, and to form her resolution. The more she considered every particular: the friendly letter, the gushing affection of Nero, the extravagant honour shown her: the more convinced was she that she had been the victim of a dastardly attempt on her life. Her only chance of safety lay in pretending entire ignorance of it. At once she despatched her freedman Agerinus to Nero, to

<sup>1</sup> 'Videre comessiones navigantium, et symphoniarum cantibus strepentes lacu—tot genera cimbarum variis coloribus picta—fluctuantem toto lacum rosam.'—SENECA.

announce her happy escape from a lamentable accident, to entreat him to moderate his impatience, and defer visiting her till her wounds had been bound up, and she had somewhat recovered from her fatigues. She gave her son the chance of repentance. It was possible that in Nero the natural instinct of love for a mother might revive, that he might see that the gods had interposed to save him from the guilt of matricide, and shrink from pursuing his purpose further. She understood now the long look he had cast on her as they parted, the visible emotion in his countenance. It had not been assumed, it was the manifestation of the stirring in him of genuine feeling. Not a word fell from her lips, not a sign did she give by which her frightened servants might suspect that an attempt had been made to destroy her. Then, with calmness, she ordered her wound and bruises to be bandaged and anointed, and that the will and the effects of the murdered Aceronia should be placed under seal.

This being done she waited the return of her chamberlain.

In the museum of Naples is a wonderful statue of Agrippina in her old age, seated in a chair, lost in sad thoughts. So must she have sat on that terrible night.

We see the same face as that which we have looked on in youth and radiant beauty in the Lateran, but now worn with trouble and withered with age. 'Full of energy, but sad,' says Taine. 'The expression resigned, the attitude that of one exhausted, weary, *addolorata*,' says Major.

Let us for a moment look from the villa at Bauli to the imperial residence at Baiae, to which Nero had returned, a prey to the most conflicting emotions, tortured by his conscience, hoping yet fearing to hear of the success of his scheme, rejoicing to think that now the main hindrance to his union with the beautiful Poppaea was removed.

But the worst was over—the parting from his mother. Now he might think of the fruit that would fall to him after having taken this step towards it. He had little fear that the truth concerning his mother's death should become public. Night and the deep tell no tales. Anicetus in his own interest would be silent; the mariners would be dispersed to distant stations. Otho, Burrhus, Seneca were not in the plot, for it had been contrived among the fewest number possible, for the sake of ensuring secrecy. He would pour forth floods of tears, pronounce a glowing oration at her funeral, elevate her to the gods, and dedicate temples in her honour. All this he would do to deceive the credulous populace.

Thus waited Nero, pacing his courts in fever of expectancy in the early morning, sleepless.

Presently the news came of the failure of the attempt. Agrippina had escaped with a slight wound and some contusions, her companions were dead. These tidings struck Nero as with a thunderbolt. Agrippina had misjudged her son. All the ebullitions of better

feeling ceased from this moment in his feeble and cowardly heart, and he was overcome with terror. He dreaded the consequences. He feared lest his mother should rouse Italy with the tale, and that all that was good and noble in the Roman people should revolt against him and insist on the death of him who had dared to lay his impious hands on his mother. 'What resources have I against her?' he piteously inquired, 'if she comes against me, thirsting for revenge, at the head of her armed slaves, having kindled revolt among the soldiery? What shall I do when she forces her way into the senate, when she appeals to the people in the Forum, and charges me with having contrived the shipwreck, wounded her and slain her friends? Call Burrhus and Seneca!' These two advisers were summoned, and in overwhelming agitation, quaking with fear, Nero told them all he had done, told them of his failure, and of his anticipations. Both were silent, silent with dismay; and when Burrhus was bidden to send soldiers to kill the Empress, he bluntly replied that 'the praetorians would never draw the sword against the daughter of Germanicus.'

Seneca knew not what to say, what to advise. In Nero's present mood no words would avail to allay his excitement, already bordering on madness. Then Anicetus stepped forward and said, 'I will accomplish what I began.'

His head was at stake. If Agrippina lived, he knew his employer well enough to be sure that Nero would put him to death for having risked the life of Agrippina, so as to disguise his own connivance. Nero was relieved by this offer. 'Now only do I receive the *imperium*,' said he, 'and from the hands of my freedman, Anicetus.' Then he urged him to all despatch, and to take with him only such men as he could rely on. At that moment the chamberlain, Agerinus, was announced as coming with a message from the empress-mother. As he entered, Anicetus adroitly threw a dagger at his feet, and then cried out that Agrippina had sent her freedman to assassinate the emperor. Agerinus was arrested and loaded with chains. This Anicetus did to give consistency to a fiction that the mother of the prince had concerted his destruction, and then, when her plan failed, had killed herself with vexation. With all haste Anicetus collected a band of picked men from among those belonging to the fleet under his command, and at their head took his way to the villa of Agrippina as the grey dawn began to lighten over the volcanic craters and ridges to the south-east. The Baian palace and the Lucrine villa lay not many miles apart, and these incidents, crowded within a narrow space, had all occurred in the course of a few hours. As soon as Agrippina's disaster was known to the residents of the coast, they rushed to the beach. 'Some,' says Tacitus, 'ascended the mole; some scrambled on to the boats attached to the strand; others ran into the water up to their midst; some stretched out their arms. The whole coast resounded with



lamentations, vows, and with the shouts of a multitude, asking all kinds of questions and receiving most unsatisfactory answers. A great many bore torches.' When it was known that Agrippina had escaped, the multitude hastened in the direction of her villa, giving vent to their joy and waving their torches. But on reaching her doors, they found them beset by the armed band of Anicetus. He had posted guards at every entrance and then had gone forward himself, striding over the mosaic 'Salve' at the door, and had imperiously ordered the slaves to conduct him to the presence of their mistress. In the meantime she had been awaiting the return of her messenger, and as the time drew on and he did not reappear, the last flicker of hope expired in her bosom. The maid, hearing the sound of voices outside, the shouts and cheers of the people, then the stillness followed by the strokes against the door, stepped from the dimly-lighted room to inquire the cause of these noises. 'What!' exclaimed the Augusta, raising her head for a moment and looking after the servant girl, 'will you also desert me?'

Anicetus entered and beckoned to some trusty ruffians to follow on his heels. Agrippina was resting on a couch, a single lamp burning by her, but by its dim light she recognised Anicetus. Her dignity, her dauntless spirit, did not even then forsake her. 'Hast thou come to see me?' she asked. 'Then go, tell my son that I am already recovered. Hast thou come to slay me? Then I say it is not my son who commissioned thee.'

Instead of answering her a ship's captain struck her over the head with a stick.

'See!' said the empress, 'strike the womb that bore the monster!' They were her last words. A rain of blows descended on her, and she fell dead on the marble pavement. Was it true that when the astrologer foretold her son should reign, and be his mother's slayer, she had answered, 'Occidat dum imperet!?' if so, fearfully had that reckless word been fulfilled.

That same night, when the soldiers had withdrawn, weeping servants of this noble woman lifted her body, laid it on a couch and bore it forth, hastily collected fuel in the cold dawn, and burnt it in her garden. One of her freedmen ran himself through with a sword, on her hastily erected sepulchre.

'During the reign of Nero no tomb was raised to her,' says Tacitus, 'nor was her grave enclosed; but afterwards, from the respect borne her by her servants, she had a humble monument elevated to her on the road to Misenum, near a villa of the Dictator Caesar, that towers above the coast and bays below.'

The Farnese *Agrippina sedula* in the museum at Naples has been already alluded to. The question must be shortly considered whether we are justified in believing it to be a representation of Agrippina the

younger. Visconti, Mongez, Bötticher, and several others are agreed that it does. Clarac and a few others think that it represents the elder Agrippina. Bernoulli does not hold that it represents either. Mr. Conrad Dressler traces in it the same features as in the Farnese Agrippina (Fig. 109). For my part I have no hesitation in saying that it is the younger Agrippina.

The hair is certainly the same in character as the coiffure of the younger Agrippina on the silver medal with the head of Nero on the reverse, and as that in which she faces Nero, and also as that in which she is represented along with Claudius. It has very much the appearance of being a wig.

Bernoulli considers that the profile is not the same as that of the Lateran statue. I am by no means of that opinion. On the contrary, it seems to me that allowing for age the faces are the same, and Mr. Conrad Dressler, the sculptor to whom I submitted them, agrees with me. The anatomical structure, as he pointed out, is the same, but of course the roundness of the fleshy parts has gone, and the *Agrippina seduta* of Naples has lost a good many of her teeth.

With regard to the expression of the face a difficulty has been entertained. Friedrichs says, 'The character of Agrippina, as given us in history, is not so attractive as her statue.' Bötticher says, 'With great skill the artist has succeeded in gently toning down the individuality of this infamous wife of Claudius, and in giving to her likeness a thoroughly noble appearance.' Now it is quite true that, as Friedrichs says, the portrait statue represents a woman more engaging than she is shown us by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio—but then—did these historians give us the true woman, or rather, have they not buried the noble and pure outline under a heap of hateful scandal, that is almost demonstrably false? The eye is directed to all this foulness, and the casual reader does not question whether it belongs to the real Agrippina or whether it be merely the filth flung at her by those who hated her. Proud she was, ambitious she was, but queenly, honourable, and pure in life to the end, unless we are very much mistaken. Her lot fell in difficult times, she had to strike out in the faces of her enemies to save herself, and she was forced—she could not help herself—to marry her uncle. She must do that or die. To die she would have consented, but she could not sacrifice also the prospects of her son. I will conclude with Adolf Stahr's description of this incomparable statue of one of the grandest women of history.

'The mother of Nero sits in a half-lying position, all her muscles relaxed, on a low stool with broad back, the left leg cast over the right, so that the left foot rests on the upper surface of the right. Both legs are stretched out in full, the feet shod with sandals which are fastened above with brooches. Her slim, well-built frame is clothed in a long thin (linen) dress reaching to her feet, the *stola* of

Roman noble ladies, with which the arms are covered as far as the elbows. The loose short arms are slit and fastened together with little brooches (*fibulae*). The upper garment is thrown back to the midst of the back, so that it forms a sort of soft cushion against the back of the deep seat, and is drawn together from right and left over the thighs, knees, and lower limbs, under the hands that are folded as those of one buried in thought, and are reposing on her lap. The general appearance is one of grand, unadorned simplicity; the expression of the face is one of deep thought and of the weariness succeeding on deep thought, and is not that of a rest that gives refreshment. The face is especially remarkable. It is that of a woman well over forty. Her features are prematurely thin and slack, and exhibit a singular contrast to the still full, strong arms and the beautiful hands, which along with the arms are devoid of bracelets and rings. The bust also is full and fine, and the moulding is distinguishable through the delicate texture of the dress. The hair is as unadorned as are the arms and hands, and it is skilfully frizzled into countless little curls which descend over the forehead to the eyebrows, and overlap the delicate ears. On the other hand, the hinder part of her coiffure is smooth from the middle of the skull, and ends in a short, Egyptian knot about three or four inches long. Brow and eyes, the least transitory of female charms, are beautifully formed, the brows finely pencilled, only slightly dipping towards the temples. The nose is a little arched in the middle and somewhat sinks towards the point. The lips of the firmly-set mouth are delicately small, but the lower lip protrudes slightly, intensifying the expression of energy. The hollow at the chin is very deep and sharp, the chin itself is not full and forcible, and it is specially in this portion that the relaxation shows itself, which is produced by old age, the signs of which are visible but less pronounced in the features and outline above. If one disregards this flabbiness, then an astonishing resemblance arrests one—one that shows us how beautiful Agrippina may have been in youth—for she resembles the empress Eugénie of France.

‘The spiritual expression is that of one wearied and disillusioned. Even if we were not prepossessed with the conviction that this was the mother of Nero, we would say at the first glance that just such Agrippina must have been in her last years. And in very truth this is the Agrippina of the final three or four years of her life, set before us in portraiture as a living image of the woman as she appeared in the domestic circle; this is a statue done for her most intimate friends. No attitude could have been more appropriate than this one of her seated in repose, and one that must have been usual to her and familiar to all who knew her well.’

It was well that the last empress in whose veins ran the Julian blood should find her last resting-place close to the building once

tenanted by the great Julius, the founder of the dynasty. There at the present day, near the modern Baccolo, between the cape of Misenum and the ruins of Baiae, the peasantry point to a smoke-blackened shapeless ruin as the sepulchre of Agrippina.

#### VI.—THE INSANITY OF NERO.

WHAT advantage did Nero reap from this crime? Did he at once proceed to divorce Octavia and marry Poppaea? Not till three years later. Did he now assert himself as a sovereign ruler, emancipated from the control of his mother? Not in the least. He made a greater fool of himself than before, that was all.

A.U.C. 812.

A.D. 59.

Act. 22.

Roman scandal said that immediately after the murder, Nero went to the villa at the Lucrine lake and looking on the corpse, with crazy humour said, 'I had no idea before that she was so good-looking.' But Tacitus admits that this was mere gossip. He however asserts that the crime was followed by a period of terrible distress of mind, through which flashed hallucinations. A treatise by Dr. Wiedemeister of Hanover on the 'Caesarian insanity' is especially valuable in dealing with the mental condition of Nero.

Dr. Wiedemeister says that Nero was not only predisposed to insanity by the intermarriages in the families from which he sprung, and in which, at all events on one side, there was scrofula, but that the historians afford us quite sufficient data for asserting that thrice in his life he fell a victim to periodic mania.

'This form of mental malady is characterised by three stages, often very distinctly marked. The initial stage is melancholy, the central stage is raving madness, and the last stage is again melancholy. The first and last stages are, for the most part, of short duration, and are less constant and pregnant manifestations than the central stage, which gives the malady its name of mania. When the melancholy stages are well developed, then the person afflicted is troubled with lack of appetite and of sleep, and distress in the pit of the heart (praecordial anxiety), is timorous, oppressed, full of self-reproach and despair, of physical as well as mental limpness and exhaustion, of disinclination for bodily or intellectual activity, and is subject to hallucinations of all sorts. The patient broods over his thoughts and fancies, withdraws from society, and all his conversation, as his thoughts, revolve about the same dismal topics; he seeks solitude and holds himself unworthy to associate with others. When the malady does not advance beyond this stage, then the patient plunges into all kinds of dissipation, and often seeks to drown his troubles in drink. Not infrequently his over-tension finds relief in an act of violence committed against himself or others.



‘Presently the second period is reached, which is mania, and in that the patient is transformed. Now the world belongs to him. No more self-reproach, terror, and remorse. Now he allows himself everything from which previously he was restrained by law, morals, or custom. He thinks he is capable of doing everything. He not only thinks this,



FIG. 113.—NERO. Bust in the Louvre.

but he is so. The previous limpness of his muscles has given place to nervous vigour. Before, he shrank from the least exertion, now he will pass weeks, months, years in violent exercise under which previously he would have succumbed. His feet are always active, his arm needs no bracing, the muscles of his breast and throat allow him to

talk and sing as long as he likes. The sense of weariness is gone from him. Before, his ideas revolved in one limited circle, but now the wild tumultuous flow of his thoughts rushes forth in all directions. He therefore appears to be more intelligent, wittier, more eloquent than previously. New ideas are continually boiling up in his brain, and as he is able to shape and combine them with a rapidity impossible for others to follow, he surprises his companions by his wit, brilliancy, and conversational power. In his own phantasy he is taller, greater, stronger than other men, his voice is more melodious and fuller in volume than that of any other man, his eloquence is of surpassing force, and though he may make the greatest fiasco when exhibiting himself before others, yet he cannot perceive that he has not overcome all men by the display of his superlative powers.

‘The melancholy madman actually hears voices address him from outside and from within, reproaching and threatening him, and actually sees forms that are full of menace. But the raving madman really hears only his own voice sweeter than the strain of any flute, and powerful as the thunder of the sea ; really sees himself superhuman in his strength, size, and beauty. All his nervous faculties are strung to the highest pitch, and this expansive mood fills him with unutterable happiness and self-satisfaction. No man places his light under a bushel, least of all the madman at this period. He forces himself into prominence, he will have others see how strong he is, how sweetly he can sing, and how beautifully he is moulded. Let the world behold what a man he is, and cast itself at his feet.

‘Nevertheless the maniac’s mind is open to some unpleasant perceptions ; but they act in a reverse manner upon him to what they do upon the man afflicted with melancholy. The maniac regards himself as not having his importance properly appreciated, as an object of envy, jealousy, and hatred, and as persecuted by those who are envious of his powers or greatness. Consequently one of the phenomena of this period of insanity is the fixed idea of being persecuted. The melancholy madman believes himself hated and pursued, and is inclined to fly from his enemies ; but the maniac seeks to revenge himself on them. With him it is a crime for any one to differ from him in opinion, to doubt his superiority, to be indifferent when he exhibits his extraordinary powers. For the maniac is the centre of the world, which was created for him, and he who does not prostrate himself at his feet must be brushed out of existence. This mood drives ordinary mortals to commit acts of reckless violence, and the mighty of the earth to become tyrants.

‘The third stage is like the first. By degrees the maniac falls out of his whirlwind of felicity into despondency like that in which he was before, and then gradually he recovers his senses. It, however, sometimes happens that the first and last stages do not occur.’

Now, knowing this, we have sufficient data given us by the historians of antiquity to say that Nero had three accesses of insanity during his reign. He was not mad when he resolved on and carried out his mother's murder; but his first attack followed it immediately, and was precipitated by the excitement of his feelings and the anguish of his conscience consequent on it.

'The *first* attack under which Nero suffered began in April A.D. 59, and lasted till the autumn of A.D. 61, that is to say, for two years and a half, and the first stage and last stage of melancholia lasted each four months and a half, in all for nine months, and the actual maniacal condition for one year and nine months. From the last quarter of 61 to the second quarter of 62 Nero was in a sound condition of mind.

'The *second* attack was in the autumn of 62, and lasted till April 65, consequently again two years and a half. The initial period was marked by the craze about being persecuted. A melancholy initial stage is not to be determined with any certainty, but a short intermediary period of tranquillity is noted, apparently following an attack of epilepsy in 64.

'The period of relative soundness lasted till the autumn of 65.

'The *third* attack was in the autumn of 65, and lasted till the spring of 68; again for two years and a half. At the beginning, a slight melancholy was shown; towards the end of his life the melancholy mood predominated in the emperor.'

Suetonius expressly tells us that in spite of all his debauches Nero was only three times disordered (*languit*) during the fourteen years of his reign. This expression probably refers to the depressed condition he was in when the melancholy fit was on him.

We may now resume the thread of our story.

When the crime had been committed, Burrhus and Seneca consulted what was to be done; and but one course appeared open to them, to conceal the facts as far as possible, and to represent the death of Agrippina as an execution committed on a woman who had attempted the life of the prince. Anicetus had furnished them with the outline of the story that was to be formulated, and he was actively engaged in circulating this fiction among the praetorians and the attendants of the emperor; though it did not receive ready credence, for, as many shrewdly observed, when a woman has but just escaped drowning, she is not then in a mood for a conspiracy.

Seneca drew up a letter to the senate in the name of Nero, the substance of which is given us by Tacitus. It was: 'That Agerinus, a confidential freedman of Agrippina, had been sent by her to assassinate Nero, but had been detected as he entered the emperor's presence with a dagger in his possession; and that she had atoned for her crime by suicide, on the suggestion of her own guilty conscience. To this was added a rehearsal of the crimes of Agrippina: how she had aimed at co-ordinate power with her son, and at drawing from the praetorians an oath of

submission and fidelity to herself; how that, disappointed in her ambition, she had become exasperated against the soldiers, the fathers, and the people of Rome, had opposed the giving of largesses to the soldiers and gifts to the people, and had plotted against the most illustrious citizens; how that she had attempted to take a seat in the senate, and how it had taxed all the ingenuity and abilities of her son to defeat her object in this matter. Then all the atrocities committed during the reign of Claudius were saddled on her, and the senate was congratulated on her fall.'

The cringing and obsequious senate at once passed votes of congratulation to the emperor on his happy escape, and vowed 'that the Quinquatrian festival, during which the conspiracy had been detected, should be celebrated by anniversary spectacles; that in the senate should be erected a statue of the preserving goddess, Minerva, hard by that of the prince, and that the birthday of Agrippina should be stamped in the calendar as a day of ill-luck.'

One man, Thrasea Paetus, had the decency to rise from his seat in the senate and leave it in protest; for, as Dio says, 'What he wanted to say, that he could not, and what he could say, that he would not.' 'Hereby laying a foundation of danger to himself, without doing good to any one,' says Tacitus. When this was represented to him, he answered, 'Nero may kill me, but hurt me he cannot.' He had never stooped to join in the base adulation of the prince; hitherto he had been wont to pass over the sallies of flattery in silence, or give them a curt assent.

A great festival of thanksgiving to the gods was voted because they had preserved the emperor from the murderous designs of his mother. When, during this celebration in April, the elephants drawing the imperial chariot of Augustus round the circus halted before the seats of the senators and refused to budge, the senators began to fear that their conduct had excited the indignation of heaven, and their hearts stood still with dread when the sun became totally eclipsed in the midst of the performance, so that the stars appeared (30th April).

In the meantime Nero had become a prey to a disordered mind. On the night of the murder, or rather on the morning, for it took place after turn of night, he was in the most profound agitation. Pale, with disordered face, he stared before him, now silent, as though struck speechless, then trembling in all his limbs.

At length he cast himself on his bed, but his deadly fear drove him from it, and as one crazed (*mentis inops*) he asked when the day would break. His condition was so pitiable that Burrhus was alarmed, and sought to pacify him by humouring the notion that he had been the object of a conspiracy. He sent the tribunes of the bodyguard to kiss his hands, and congratulate him on his escape from an unexpected danger.

Unable to stay longer in his villa so near to the place where Agrip-



pina had perished, he fled to Neapolis, and on his way thought that wailings sounded from the house of the dead, where the smoke of the pyre was still curling, and that trumpet blasts pealed from the rocks.

The face of the country will not change as do the faces of courtiers,' he complained; and unable to endure the sight of the same sea and the same hills as those near which the crime had been committed, he hoped to find rest elsewhere. He appeared sad and dejected in his mien, seeming to be ill-pleased at his own preservation, and to mourn the death of his mother. Tacitus regards this as assumed, as a bit of deep dissimulation; but it was not so; he was in the first stage of madness, in the state of melancholia.

Deputations arrived from the adjacent Campanian municipalities to testify their joy at his deliverance, and victims were offered in the temples. But none of these flatteries relieved his ever-present unrest. He was full of anxiety, and in the deepest depression; restless day and night. If a feverish sleep visited his eyes, he was vexed with frightful dreams, and thought he saw the ghost of his mother glide about his couch, or the Furies surround him with their snake-scourges and burning torches; or again, he dreamt that he was seated in a boat and steering through a foaming sea. Then suddenly out of the darkness and storm a hand was stretched which snatched the helm from him, whereupon he would leap shrieking from his bed, quivering in every limb.

Even by day he was subject to hallucinations. He fancied the blare of a trumpet rang suddenly in his ears wherever he was, but always from the direction where lay the ashes of his mother. He moved from place to place in hopes of escaping this trumpet sound; but it followed him everywhere.

Magicians were called in to lay the spirits, or at all events to produce the ghost of Agrippina and learn from it how it might be appeased, that Nero might no more be haunted; but their exorcisms and invocations proved unavailing to dispel the phantasies that rioted in the sick brain of the wretched prince. This lasted all April. Hopes were entertained that on the 9th day of May, when was the festival of the Lemures—the Pagan All Souls Day—something might be achieved. Under the direction of Curio Nero followed all the ritual directions for the solemnisation of the rites, through the ensuing night of mystery, in which the ghosts walked. But in vain; he could obtain no alleviation to his melancholy. 'That I am safe,' wrote he to the senate, in acknowledgment of their message of congratulation, 'I hardly believe, and I do not know that I am glad of it,'<sup>1</sup> words that exactly express his mood. For no change of domicile afforded him any relief; wherever he went, rambling disconsolately from place to place in Campania, the hallucinations followed him.

<sup>1</sup> 'Salvum me esse adhuc, nec credo nec gaudeo.'

But what magic could not effect, that was done by time. The hallucinations, the fear, and with it the melancholy, abated; and Nero was now in a humour to listen to the entreaties of his friends to return to Rome. Hitherto no persuasion would induce him to do this. He thought he was hated, loathed by the Roman people and senate for what he had done, that they would rise in a mass against the murderer of his mother.

His advisers urged him, as his best security, to affect the confidence of innocence and not to shrink from appearing in the capital. Accordingly he made his entrance into Rome. Forth streamed the senators in festal attire to meet him; their wives and children were ranged on either side of the Appian Way, strewing flowers and waving green boughs. The streets were thronged with seats, reared against the houses, to accommodate the multitude of spectators as at a triumphal procession. 'And a triumph indeed it was; Nero had conquered Rome, and now led its people at his chariot-wheels to the Capitol,' says Dean Merivale. Yet ominous indications were given that the people, though demonstrative of their curiosity and loyalty, did not excuse his crime. The statues of Agrippina had indeed been cast down, but one remained on the way, that had escaped overthrow, and a rug was hastily cast over it. Whereupon some one scrawled in chalk on the wrap, 'I veil myself in shame, but thou art not ashamed of thyself.'

The grim humour of the populace found its vent in significant acts. Leather sacks were at night slung to the statues of Nero—for the punishment of a parricide was to be sewed up in one and cast into the Tiber. One man exposed a boy in the slave-market with a board over his head, bearing the inscription, 'To be sold—lest he should murder his mother;' and on hoardings were scribbled the names of the parricides Nero, Orestes, and Alcmaeon. The epigram was posted upon the walls—

'Who says that Nero comes not of Aenean race,  
When each took off a parent?'<sup>1</sup>

On the stage an actor, when saying, 'Farewell, O father! farewell, O mother!' pretended to be eating a mushroom at the 'O Father,' and to strike out swimming at the 'O mother,' and was received with roars of laughter. He clenched the joke by waving his hand towards the benches of the senators, with the significant words—

'But you—you stand upon the brink of death.'

The shouts of 'Nero has killed his mother!' rang under the Palatine heights, and men brought their fellows before the emperor, charging them with having said this, 'not that they sought their destruction, but in order to give annoyance to Nero.'

<sup>1</sup> Aeneas carried his father on his shoulders from Troy.

On his return to Rome, the prince paid a visit to his aunt Domitia Lepida, who was laid up in bed, ill, as well as far advanced in years. She had ever hated Agrippina, as has been already related, because Crispus Passienus had divorced her to marry Agrippina. She did not reproach her nephew for what he had done, but stroked his cheek and chin, covered with a light beard, and said, 'Ah! may I but live to see the day when this is shaved for the first time.' Nero turned to those about him and observed in a low tone, that to satisfy her he must have his beard shaved at once. As she died shortly after, it was said that he had ordered the physicians to poison her, because he coveted her villa at Baiae, and her estates at Ravenna. But his remark relative to his intention of shaving at once, as her time was short, doubtless formed the basis of this accusation.

From this time Nero entered on the second stage of his lunacy. It must be borne in mind that mania in this stage does not necessarily exhibit itself in raving and violence; it is rather characterised by inordinate self-esteem coupled with extraordinary restlessness and vigour.

As has been already said, Nero had from the beginning of his reign taken a keen interest in horse- and chariot-racing. The Ahenobarbi were a 'horsey' race. His father had been noted for hard driving, and in one of his headlong drives had run over a child. The love of horses came to him from his mother's side also; it was manifest in his uncle Caius. Now, along with his chariot-driving, Nero took enthusiastically to lyre-playing and singing. He was not satisfied with exhibiting at his own table or in his own gardens, but must show off in public, to the consternation and disgust of Seneca and Burrhus; for however lightly they might regard moral offences, such a defiance of the laws of etiquette was in their eyes heinous to the last degree. The moral lapses might be veiled from the vulgar eye, but not such breaches of decorum as to appear on the public stage and drive a chariot in the great circus.

Finding it impossible to dissuade him, the circus in his Vatican gardens was prepared for his use—where now stands the church of St. Peter, or rather it lay to the south side of it, on the site occupied by the sacristy, and by the German College of the Campo Santo. In this he had hitherto driven with only the slaves and freedmen to look on. It was screened from the eyes of the curious by walls and by banks of cypresses. A road ran hard by it, the pavement of which lies undisturbed under the south bell-tower of the façade of the church, and along the side of this way were tombs, fragments of which have been discovered at various times in the works undertaken in St. Peter's.

As Nero was an enthusiastic devotee of the green faction, he clothed himself in green, and had the course strewn with copperas. He submitted to the training imposed on all chariot-drivers for the races down to the minutest particulars.

But Nero was by no means disposed to allow his achievements to be witnessed by his own household only. He invited his friends to become spectators, then he required youths of reduced noble families to race against him. All this was talked about in Rome, and when some servile flatterers suggested that he should exhibit in public, he seized the suggestion with eagerness, and the Circus Maximus was prepared for the occasion. Every bench was crowded, and a freedman occupied the praetor's stall, to drop a kerchief as a sign for the race to begin.

Next, all at once his caprice ran in the direction of singing. He gave concerts and recitations in the palace, in which he was the sole performer. His friends could not do him a greater favour than by inviting him to perform at banquets given in their houses. He announced that he could be hired for an evening, and one of the praetors engaged him at the price of a million sesterces to perform before his guests. But that did not suffice, he must act on the boards, and sing his part in tragedies. 'The masks he assumed were moulded to resemble his own face, or that of any woman who happened to have caught his fancy.' So he sung 'Canace in labour,' and without compunction—for he had passed the stage in which he could feel remorse—'Orestes the murderer of his mother,' and 'Hercules mad,' etc.

He considered himself a second Apollo, and, the more to resemble this god of song, he determined to have his beard shaved.

We have, happily, in the Capitoline Museum a bust of Nero taken perhaps at this time, before his beard was shorn. But he seems to have worn a beard again later, in 66-68. Dissipation had prematurely ripened him, and he looks thirty, yet he cannot have been more than one-and-twenty. In the Palatine Museum is one of him, young, with whiskers growing, before his accession of madness. That in the Capitoline Gallery shows us Nero after his brow was furrowed and his face lined with the anguish of mind he had gone through. The original was but a fragment, nevertheless the restoration aptly gives what was in the uninjured bust. The wild look of the eye, and the head turned on one side, remind us of Caius. The bust may belong to a later period, but anyhow it belongs to one when the evil spirit was on him.

He was now two-and-twenty, and his beard was to be shaved off. Whole hecatombs of victims were slain on the day on which he was shaved for the first time. The precious hair that fell under the razor was collected and placed in a case of gold set with pearls, and was conveyed in solemn procession and amidst general jubilation to the Capitol, and there offered on the altar of Jupiter. An event so important deserved commemoration through all time. Nero appointed a festival, the Juvenalia, to celebrate it. A number of invitations were sent out. All who had the slightest claim to be received at court were called together, not merely as spectators, but to assist in the festivity. Those who were in any



way capable of performing in any artistic branch practised vigorously : societies were formed for amateur theatrical performances, and those who had no particular musical or dramatic gift joined the chorus, or solicited a walking part. Neither age nor sex mattered ; men, women, boys and girls, matrons and aged men, noble and common, even men of consular rank were required to strut on the stage. An old lady of wealth and rank, named Aelia Catella, offered to perform a *pas seul* in spite of her eighty years. Representatives of ancient families, men



FIG. 114.—NERO. Bust in the Capitoline Museum.

occupying offices of dignity, assumed masks, afraid not to join in the mad frolic, yet blushing to be seen. Nero capered among them on the day of exhibition, and tore off the masks before the assembled crowds, comprising the rabble of Romans and barbarians assembled in the world's metropolis, thus exposing to their derision magistrates before whose courts they had stood, and public functionaries who were wont to appear in state with attendant lictors.

To accommodate the crowds five or six theatres were erected.

An elephant was made to ascend, by means of ropes, with a rider on its back to the topmost gallery of one of the theatres. Horses pranced and went through antics; gladiators slew wild beasts in the amphitheatre. Chariots raced in the circus. On the stage appeared the first nobility of Rome, playing pipes and dancing, or performing in tragedies and comedies, or, again, contesting with Nero in harping or singing, and of course succumbing before his superior powers.

Multitudes from all parts were assembled to see the chief men and ladies of Roman society make fools of themselves, with the emperor at their head. The Macedonians present picked out some clown and said, jeering, 'See—a great grandson of L. Aemilius Paulus who conquered us!' And the Greeks, laughing, said, 'There with a pipe in his mouth is a Mummius. What would old Achaicus have said to this, who plundered Athens and Corinth of their works of art, and transported them to Rome or sold them to the king of Pergamum?' And the Sicilians jeered to see a Claudius; the natives of Epirus to behold an Appius; the Spaniards to observe a Publius; and the Carthaginians to recognise an Africanus—all acting as pipers and ballet-dancers and merry-andrews on the stage. But, says Dio, 'The Romans said to themselves with shame—"These are the grandchildren of our own greatest men!"'

Nero threw among the crowd all kinds of dainties and the most costly gems; or else put tickets on balls, qualifying those who caught them in a scramble to claim horses, chariots, embroidered dresses, gold and silver vessels.

We may well believe that when this mad revelry was going on, the most worthy citizens in Rome wished they had died so as not to have seen such degradation.

But what was the climax of infamy of the whole affair in the eyes of the Romans was the performance on the boards of the emperor himself. He bade Gallio, the elder brother of Seneca, appear as herald to announce that he, the emperor, would contest the prize of the crown with any performer who would stand up against him in harp-playing and singing.

Nero appeared before the audience in the costume of a Greek minstrel, and, bowing and waving his hands, solicited the kind favour of the public. 'Gentlemen and ladies,' said he, 'pray gave me a favourable attention.' Then after a short prelude he sang the ode 'Attis' or 'The Bacchantes,' and twanged his harp and laboured to fill the theatre with the volume of his resonant tones. It was a painful moment for the audience, for the imperial voice was weak and husky, and the performance was so execrable that those who listened did not know whether to laugh or cry. It was all the same to Nero, for he had not the smallest mistrust in the strength and sweetness of his voice, and his skill in harp-playing. Seneca and Burrhus had been set as

prompters hard by, and they clapped hands and waved their garments as a sign to the audience to applaud. Seneca with stoic self-control did not let his disgust appear; but Burrhus was less schooled, and he was unable to disguise his 'distress under an aspect of feigned admiration. Nero had already collected together a body of devoted applauders, the Augustian youths—five thousand in number—whose function it was to serve a *claque*, and these roared out at every pause in the lamentable performance, 'Oh, the incomparable Caesar! Apollo to a hair! The Augustus, and yet surely the Pythian God! On our oath, Caesar, there is not a man who can surpass thee!'

The sightseers now adjourned to the Naumachia of Augustus, that they might witness by torchlight a combat of gladiators on ships. About midnight the emperor left the water-theatre in a barge that passed out from the arena by a canal into the Tiber, whence he was conducted to his palace.

But Nero was not satisfied yet. He would be more than a great singer, he would be celebrated as a poet also. He set to work in feverish enthusiasm to compose verses, and his boon companions did what they could with them, cut off superfluous feet and pulled out limping lines, and added verses to make sense where naught reigned in the original but wild confusion. The text was patched and scored through and through; and when published the poems exhibited on their face, says Tacitus, the traces of their origin. 'They were without fire and inspiration, and had none of that evenness that marks the production of one man.' Suetonius does not say that they were ridiculous or poor. His words are, 'Having a turn for poetry he composed verses with ease and pleasure, and did not, as some supposed, pass off those of others as his own. Several little pocket-books and loose sheets have come into my possession which contain some well-known verses in his own hand-writing, and written in such a manner that it is evident, from the blotting and interlining, that they had been composed by himself, and were not mere copies, or done from dictation.'

A.U.C. 813.  
A.D. 60.  
Act. 23.

Persius says that Nero aimed at extravagant, full-mouthed words. Some of his compositions lingered on after he was gone, and were chanted in baths and small theatres; and Apollonius of Tyana, who died not long after the death of Domitian, A.D. 96, heard a strolling singer recite the verses of Nero in Rome, imitating the action and manner of the emperor. Apollonius approved of neither the substance nor the delivery.

At the beginning of A.D. 60 Nero instituted the Neronian Games, that were to be performed every five years in imitation of the Greek contests among singers, musicians, and wrestlers; and they took place in a gymnasium he had erected for the purpose. Tacitus allows that these games passed 'without any remarkable violation of decorum;

nor did the zeal of the people break out into excesses ; for though actors were restored to the stage, they were restrained from exhibiting things that were sacred. The prize of eloquence was adjudged to Caesar alone.' He, however, declined the wreath and hung it on the bust of Augustus.

At this time a comet appeared in the sky and filled men with anticipations of a change of government or of some calamity, and Nero himself seems to have been alarmed by it. He fell sick—probably he had passed into the third stage of his madness, and was again immersed in melancholy. His sickness was preceded by an act of outrageous profanity as well as indecency in the eyes of the Romans. He bathed in the sources of the Marcian water that was conveyed by aqueduct to the capital.

His recovery was marked by an act of lenity and sense, of which he was incapable when in his crazy moods. Rubellius Plautus, a quiet man, sober in his dress, blameless in conduct, and without ambition, was pointed out by the common voice as he who should succeed Nero on the throne ; for he was the great-grandson of Tiberius, who was the adopted son of Augustus. A flash of lightning fell on the table at Tibur, where Nero was, and destroyed the food ; some said, but that was false, that it had struck the goblet from his hand ; and it was noted that Tibur was the nursery whence the paternal ancestors of Plautus sprang. A good number of hot-heads assembled and desired to form a plot for the overthrow of Nero and the elevation of Plautus.

Nero heard of this and wrote to Rubellius, 'that he would consult the peace of Rome, if he would quietly withdraw from it, and from the presence of those who were busy with his name. He had hereditary estates in Asia, and he had better pass his last days on them.' Plautus and his wife and friends accordingly retired thither.

During his illness Nero had himself spoken of Memmius Regulus as worthy to succeed him. On his recovery he left Regulus unmolested, though from what he had said, which was bruited about, eyes were turned on Memmius with expectancy.

We may gather from the silence of Tacitus that Nero was quiet, and did nothing extraordinary on his recovery. And in the beginning of the following year he again acted with moderation and clemency. The praetor Antistius had composed some scurrilous verses on the prince, and these he recited at a large convivial assembly in the house of Ostorius Scapula. He was thereupon brought to his trial, and the consul-elect moved that Antistius should be degraded from the praetorship and put to death. Then Paetus Thrasea, the dauntless man who had refused to remain in the senate when it congratulated Nero on the death of his mother, moved an amendment that he should be banished. His courage gave fortitude to others and the amendment was carried. The consuls, however, were afraid to sanction this decree, and wrote to Nero for advice.

A. U. C. 815.

A. D. 62.

Aet. 25.



He gave them full leave to entirely acquit the accused. In another case Nero acted with righteous severity. Fabricius Veiento, afterwards infamous as an informer in the reign of Domitian, had composed libellous invectives against a great number of the senators and pontiffs. These scurrilous writings 'were universally sought and read,' and passed secretly from one to another. He was accused on this charge, as also of having sold his influence with the prince for the obtaining of public offices. Nero at once determined himself to sit in judgment in this case. The charge was proved. The scandalous works were ordered to be burnt, and Veiento to be banished.

In this year the faithful old soldier Burrhus died of quinsy. 'His throat gradually swelled internally, and the passage choked, so that he was suffocated.' He was a blunt, worthy man, who had had a hard time of office lately, but had done his best in it. As an instance of his bluntness the story was told that one day having given his opinion, Nero, not catching what he said, asked for it again. Burrhus answered shortly, 'When I have said my say, don't ask me for it a second time.' After the death of Agrippina he had undertaken the protection of Octavia and had opposed her divorce. Once when Nero urged his antipathy to her, 'Very well,' said Burrhus, 'send her off, but give up her dower with her,' meaning his succession to the throne of Claudius. Nero visited him when ill, and asked how he felt. He could get no other answer from him than the laconic, 'I'm well.' Nero sent a drug recommended by his physician for reducing the swelling, but it failed, and because it failed Nero was said to have poisoned his old tutor with it.

The loss of Burrhus was greatly felt, not only because he was universally respected, but because his place was taken immediately by one of the vilest of men, Tigellinus; a man only so far like Burrhus that he had risen from humble origin. The loss of the minister of war 'made an inroad on the influence of Seneca,' and prepared the way for his fall. Seneca had a great many enemies. His wealth excited jealousy, for he was possessed of splendid villas and extensive and beautifully laid out gardens, almost all of which had been given him in fits of reckless good-nature by his pupil. In order to rouse the suspicion of the emperor against him a host of accusations rained on Seneca. His avarice, his greed after estates, were in contradiction to his philosophic principles. He had taken advantage of his intimacy with the prince to plunder him, of his position over affairs to put both hands into the treasury. His ambition was to out-blaze the sovereign. He was given to detraction of the supreme qualities of his master. He pretended to be the author himself of those eloquent effusions that flowed from the divine lips of the Augustus. He took up poetry, not because he loved the muses, but to curry favour with the prince. He tittle-tattled and told tales of what took place in the

palace. He had jeered at his master as a coachman. And then again what more unworthy for an emperor than to be accompanied everywhere by his schoolmaster, as though he were a boy still wearing the bulla?

Seneca saw the danger to which he was exposed, and he took the precaution to forestall it. He asked to be granted an audience with his sovereign, and then he thanked Nero for all the goodness he had shown to him, a student, a man of philosophy and of letters: for all the presents he had made him and which he had accepted, not that he desired such things, but because it would have been a lack of courtesy to have refused them. Now, said he, the sovereign could need him no more, and as for all his wealth, it was an encumbrance, might he pour it back into the treasury and retire into solitude himself to his beloved studies? Nero, touched with affection and regard for his old mentor, replied, 'You nursed my childhood, and you directed my youth by your moral lessons and your counsel. The favours you have bestowed on me I shall never forget; the gifts you have had from me—they are subject to the chances of fortune; great they may seem to be, but they do not exceed the possessions of many others—even freedmen and men of far inferior parts have cut a finer figure in these things than you. You have attained maturity of years and yet have not lost your vigour for business or enjoyment. I want you still as my adviser and monitor, lest I deviate from the right path, through the giddiness of youth. If you now retire and return your riches, the tongues of men will say that this is because you consider me rapacious and dread me as cruel.'

Tacitus thinks that the tears and embraces of Nero were a piece of dissimulation. Surely it was not so. Nero had nothing to gain by feigning a desire to keep Seneca by him. He was a creature of impulse, ready to gush with emotion, to feel real tenderness, and to be sincere for a moment; but there was no stability in his mood, no consideration for any one but himself, and no depth in his affection. Seneca was unable to withdraw as he desired, so he observed caution in the display of his wealth and in his reception of visitors.

During this period of recovered mental health, we hear no more of festivities, processions, dances, music, and theatrical exhibitions. The emperor had withdrawn almost entirely from public life, and spent most of his time in his villas among the mountains.

Then, towards the close of A.D. 62, he was again attacked with mental indisposition, and it took the form, not of melancholia but of fear of secret enemies. First he forgot all he had said to Seneca, and showed him cold mistrust that presaged ruin. Tigellinus was now everything to the young Caesar. Nero had made his acquaintance as a horse-dealer, had taken him into favour, and he gradually worked himself into much the position once occupied by Otho, as his second

self. And now Poppaea, to whom it seemed unaccountable that Nero should not have carried out the scheme proposed when he dyed his hands in the blood of his mother, and who had been waiting for two years to gather the fruit of the murder of Agrippina, saw no other way of gaining her end than by entering into negotiations with Tigellinus, and the two together entangled the prince completely in their net. The time was propitious, as another access of brain-disorder came on in the autumn after the death of Burrhus.

The emperor was filled with panic, fearing that he was an object of conspirators on all sides. Everywhere pretenders to the throne were starting up. His first suspicions fell on Sulla, a poor man, living in banishment at Marseilles; then on Rubellius Plautus, residing in Asia. Nero sent orders not only for their execution, but that their heads should be sent him. When they arrived, 'I did not know,' said he, 'that Sulla had grey hairs, or that Plautus had such a long nose.' The assassins of Sulla reached Marseilles in six days, we are told, and took off his head as he sat at meat. Plautus was fallen upon when stripped and taking his corporal exercises.

Now Nero resolved to divorce Octavia. To effect this Tigellinus suborned witnesses to accuse her of lightness. Her servants were tortured to extract from them something against their mistress. Some few under the stress of pain made false admissions, but the majority vindicated her honour as irreproachable. One girl, whilst on the rack, being hard pressed by questions from Tigellinus, spat in his face, and told him her opinion in a 'scathing sarcasm which clings like the shirt of Nessus to his name' (Merivale). The case broke down completely. However, Nero proceeded to divorce Octavia, and made over to her the house of Burrhus and the estate of Plautus. But soon he became uneasy, and banished her into Campania. 'This led to frequent and undisguised murmurs among the people,' says Tacitus, 'who are inconsiderate in what they say or do, and from their insignificance have nothing to fear.' These murmurs increased the alarm of Nero, and he sent to have Octavia brought back; she returned with alacrity, trusting he had come to a better mind. 'Forthwith the people ascended the Capitol in transports of joy, and poured forth their unfeigned thanks to the gods. They threw down the statues of Poppaea, bore those of Octavia on their shoulders, wreathed them with garlands, and placed them in the forum and temples. They even went so far as to offer a tribute of applause to the prince for receiving Octavia back again, and to make him the object of their grateful adoration.' The populace poured into the courts of the palace, and shouted the name of Octavia. Nero sent forth the guards to disperse them, and then he had all the statues of Poppaea set up again. That wretched woman, fearing the consequences of this demonstration of popular favour for her rival, rushed into the pre-

sence of Nero, threw herself at his feet, and appealed to his fears, then paramount in his heated brain.

‘See! the people have taken up arms! All they want is a leader. Let Octavia show herself, and what will be the result, when such a riot can take place in her absence? The people clamour for her. Very well, stoop—you the prince, and obey the rabble. If they are thus audacious now, what will they show themselves when they despair of seeing Octavia recognised as the wife of Nero? What they will do is—they will give another husband to Octavia in his place.’ She appealed to his tenderness. ‘My circumstances are not such that I can demand a marriage, though that object is dearer to me than life. My life is jeopardised by these slaves and creatures of Octavia, who call themselves the people of Rome, and who dare to commit in times of peace violences only tolerable in war.’

Nero was ever responsive to a present influence, especially such as appealed to his fears or vanity. What was to be done? Again the infamous Anicetus stepped forward. He who had contrived the murder of Agrippina would effect that also of Octavia. He was ready to take on himself the death of the wife as well as of the mother of his master. He undertook to swear that he had himself been guilty of an intrigue with Octavia. He did so. A pretended council was held over his confession, and he was banished to Sardinia, where he was allowed full enjoyment of his wealth, and where eventually he died a natural death.

Nero immediately issued an edict in which he announced ‘that Octavia had intrigued with Anicetus, the admiral, in the hopes of gaining the fleet in a conspiracy against the prince.’ Then he ordered her to be banished to the isle of Pandateria, and there to be kept under guard.

Twelve days after the divorce, Nero married Poppaea. But this woman could not rest so long as Octavia lived, the darling of the Roman people, as she knew herself to be its abhorrence.

Octavia, aged but twenty, ‘thrown among centurions and common soldiers,’ on the barren isle of Pandateria, had not long to tarry there before the order came for her to die. ‘But why?’ protested Octavia, ‘I am now a widow—or, if you will have it, the sister of the emperor.’<sup>1</sup> She appealed to the spirits of the Germanici, the ancestors of Nero, to the shade of Agrippina who had so long protected her. ‘Had she lived,’ sighed the poor girl, ‘I might have been unhappy as a wife, but I should not have been doomed to destruction.’

She was bound fast and her veins opened; she fainted and her blood ceased to flow; so she was borne into a vapour bath and stifled in its steam. Her head was cut off and forwarded to Poppaea.

‘Offerings at the temples were decreed by the fathers,’ says Tacitus,

<sup>1</sup> Through the adoption of Nero by Claudius.



'on account of these events; a circumstance which I record in order that all those who read the calamities of these times, may conclude by anticipation, that as often as a banishment or a murder was perpetrated by the prince's orders, so often thanks were rendered to the gods; and those acts which in former times were resorted to to distinguish prosperous occurrences, were now made the tokens of public disaster.'

Have we any portraits of the unfortunate Octavia? None on medals on which we can rely. The impressions are bad and the type of face on them not the same. A Corinthian bronze represents her with hair as worn by Livia; that of Sinope gives her with hair frizzled as worn by Agrippina. The features are not sufficiently individualised to be of value, and they represent a woman much older than was the daughter of Messalina.

Yet somewhere among the numerous busts of unknown ladies—ladies emphatically of culture, and, in spite of their times and the abominations that were rampant, virtuous—that are to be found in Rome and Naples and elsewhere, there probably is a bust of Octavia, but if so, it is to be recognised or rather conjecturally attributed to her from a certain likeness traced in it to her father and to her mother. Yet I know of none such, and regret it.

Within a twelvemonth of her marriage to Nero, Poppaea presented him with a daughter; this filled him with extravagant joy. He called her Augusta, and conferred the same title on Poppaea. The child was born at Antium, the birthplace of Nero himself. The servile senate at once decreed a temple to Fecundity, and when the child died, voted her a temple, a priest and divine honours. On the birth of this babe, at the invitation of the emperor, the senate rushed headlong to Antium to offer their congratulations, only Paetus Thrasea remaining behind, he not having been included in the invitation. Afterwards Nero assured Seneca that he had made up his quarrel with Thrasea, and the philosopher congratulated him on having done so, as Thrasea was regarded as one of the most upright of men then living.

A. U. C. 816.  
A. D. 63.  
Aet. 26.

Nero's suspicious mood was still on him, and finding that Poppaea's son, Rufinus Crispus, was playing with other children at being an emperor he ordered the slaves to drown him whilst he was fishing. Another of his victims, Aulus Plautinus, a youth, he put to death because he suspected his mother had encouraged him to aspire to the empire, on what possible grounds none could say. The same year was marked by a short outbreak of the wildest form of his mania. The suspicion that he was an object of conspiracy passed away, and he broke out again in mad frolics, but probably not to the same extent as before, as all that can be certainly said of this period is that he gave a gladiatorial show on a large scale, indeed quite as large and sumptuous as any shown on the previous occasion, but disgraceful above the others in that ladies of rank were

induced to wrestle and fight in the arena, a thing hitherto unheard of. But the access of insanity reached its height in the following year.

Poppaea had reached the zenith of her ambition : she was empress, she had hold over the affections of Nero to the last, and could sway his mind as she liked. And yet she probably was not happy, was well aware how uncertain her position was, at the caprice of a madman who scrupled at nothing. It is with some surprise that we find Poppaea spoken of by Josephus as 'a pious woman,' which in him means one who inclined to the Jewish religion. And when we learn that after her death she was not burnt, but buried, there is some colour lent to the suspicion that the wretched woman felt remorse for her crimes, or in the terrible loneliness and peril of her position craved for something to stay up her soul, and turned an ear to the words of a Jewish physician or comedian, or perhaps to those of a Christian slave.

In A.D. 61 S. Paul was in Rome. He was living in 'his own hired house,' but in charge of the imperial guard, possibly within the precincts of Nero's palace.<sup>1</sup> During two years, to A.D. 63, he remained there along with S. Luke, S. Timothy, Epaphras, Aristarchus, John, Mark, and Tychicus and Demas, who shared his imprisonment, and that his teaching met with success even among the imperial guard and in the household of Nero, we know from himself.<sup>2</sup> It is not impossible, it is not even improbable, that some of that teaching may have reached the ear and heart of that wicked, but not utterly lost, woman, and have kindled in it one spark of 'better life.'

That Seneca was brought into connection with S. Paul was at one time supposed, owing to certain resemblances in their writing and teaching, but these are more apparent than real, and it is to the last degree improbable that the philosopher should have met the Apostle ; for the latter arrived in Rome just as Seneca was withdrawing from public affairs, when his influence was on the decline and he sought to relax himself in his country villas.<sup>3</sup>

What is remarkable and disappointing to the historian is to find that the Epistles of S. Paul written from Rome during his residence there of three years add nothing whatever to our information as to what there transpired.

#### VII.—THE BURNING OF ROME.

THE year 64 was marked by Nero's mania assuming an acute form. We might have hesitated to say that the symptoms in 63 were those of madness, but the tokens of derangement in the following year are unmistakeable, and throw light on the condition of his brain in the preceding period. Now, says Tacitus, from day to day a more intense longing came over the emperor to exhibit his

A.U.C. 817.  
A.D. 64.  
Act. 27.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. i. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Phil. iv. 22.

<sup>3</sup> See Aubertin, *Sénèque et S. Paul*, Paris, 1872.

powers, and that before a discriminating, highly cultured public. His performances at the Juvenalia, and before the aristocracy and the mob of Rome did not suffice. What artistic appreciation had they? The Greeks gave the tone to art, they were the only truly aesthetically gifted people on earth; he would therefore submit his performances to their criticism. The applause of the Roman people was purchased, or was given in adulation, that of the Greeks would surely be granted according to judgment, and be independent.



FIG. 115.—NERO. Bust in the Louvre.

‘The Greeks,’ said he, ‘were the only people who had an ear for music, and were the only good judges of him and his attainments.’

In preparing for the ordeal he was affected with genuine nervousness. He laboured hard to acquire perfect skill and to give to his voice full tone. He practised with Terpnus from dinner till late in the night; he lay for hours on his back with a sheet of lead on his chest, he took emetics, he abstained from bread and fruit, he consumed leeks and oil; on the days before he performed he took nothing else. He practised vigorously

at dancing, and because he could not kick about his feet with the nimbleness of his master, he had the latter put to death. At length he conceived that his 'heavenly voice' had attained incomparable richness and volume, and that his skill was complete, so he sallied forth to confound the Greeks of Naples in a great concert.

A few words may here be given to Nero's personal appearance at this period. When shaved smooth he affected to resemble Apollo, and to have a voice which would enchant the world as a second Orpheus.

He was a little below middle size, without any striking deformity. His body was covered with blotches. His neck was fat and short, and indeed he was too fleshy and stout to make a figure as Apollo, and his stomach was unduly large and protruding, whilst his legs were small and short. His fair hair he wore cut in stages and arranged in short curls, but during the Greek 'tour' he wore it long, flowing down over his shoulders.

He usually wore a light kerchief round his throat, as a protection to his voice, and a loose dress ungirded.

The most particular account of his vocal powers we derive from Lucian, who, though living long after, no doubt quoted from some contemporary authority. He says that Nature had given Nero a voice of very ordinary compass, but that he was bent on straining to reach high notes, and growl out bass tones beyond his proper range. When he sang bass, the sound was muffled and like a buzzing of wasps or bees. However, this was helped out or disguised by the accompaniment, and might have passed as a tolerable performance had it been given by any one else but a sovereign. But when he would reach high notes like one of the great masters of song, then involuntarily the audience exploded into fits of laughter, however dangerous it was to do so. For he shook himself, gasped for breath, strained himself to the toe-tips to help out his high notes, made contortions like a criminal bound to the wheel, and his naturally red face turned to the colour of copper.

Thoroughly prepared to electrify the world with his song, Nero set off for Neapolis, taking with him the Augustal band of five thousand men, all handsome fellows with long locks, in gay uniform and with gold rings on their left hands, under an officer who received as his wage forty thousand sesterces, about three hundred pounds per annum. They were divided into bands: the Hummers, who buzzed approval, the Patterers, who clapped their hands, and the Clashers, who more riotously banged earthenware pot-covers together, or perhaps kicked the earthenware jars on which the seats at a theatre were raised. He was attended by a thousand baggage-carts, the mules all shod with silver, and the drivers dressed in scarlet jackets of finest Canusian cloth. A body of Africans with glittering bracelets, mounted on their jennets in splendid trappings, also attended him. Over the theatrical wardrobe was installed



Calvia Crispinella, a noble Roman lady. As for Nero, he never wore the same garment a second time. On reaching Naples, some Alexandrians presented themselves before him, they were the inventors of a musical applause, something like the long-drawn-out *Amens* in fashion in churches nowadays. This so delighted Nero that the men were engaged on the spot and commissioned to drill the Augustals in this new department of applause.

Neapolis was crowded, all the great men and small from the neighbourhood, with wives and children, had poured into the place to see and hear their emperor sing and act on the boards—it was a new form of sensation altogether.

His reception was enthusiastic. He sang for whole days in succession, and hardly allowed himself time for rest. The fever of excitement and desire not to deny the audience any of what they had come to hear drove him on to the stage from his bed or from table. He did not even allow himself the time to take a bath. He had his meals served him in the orchestra, and dined and supped before the spectators, apologising to them in Greek for the pause, saying he would only drink another drop, and then treat them to something really of the first quality. Whilst he was performing, an earthquake shook the theatre, but Nero sang through it all, undisturbed, and thus evoked deafening cheers. Finally, it appeared as though the gods approved of this amateur-dramatical prince, for, after the theatre was cleared of performers and spectators, shaken by the earthquake it collapsed without injury to any one. Nero regarded this as a good omen, and, inspired by the muse of poetry, he composed and sang a hymn to the gods, thanking them for the success of this first performance.

Intoxicated with applause, Nero now resolved to visit Greece itself, and make that classic land the judge of his execution, and to strive there with the most famous artists for the crowns given in the world-famous contests.

He halted at Beneventum to witness some gladiatorial sports given there by a favourite, Vatinius. This fellow had been a cobbler's apprentice, he was deformed, hunchbacked, and had a very long nose, so that vessels with spouts took their name in derision from him, much as, long after, Bellarmine jugs were called after the Cardinal. He had a witty and sharp tongue, and had deserted the awl and wax for the boards, had become a buffoon and taken Nero's fancy. In the palace he occupied the position of court-fool, and took advantage of his position to allow himself liberties, which, in any one else, would have been resented. 'I hate you, Nero,' said he, one day. 'Why so?' 'Because you are a senator.' But he was more than a fool, he was cunning, and he managed to help himself pretty freely out of the imperial treasury, and amass a large fortune; he now resided in Beneventum, and gave a splendid entertainment to the emperor.

‘In the course of time Nero sank. From Seneca he declined to the freedmen, from the freedmen to Tigellinus, from Tigellinus to Vatinius, from Vatinius to an ape’ (*Wiedemeister*).

All at once, with the caprice of a madman, Nero changed his mind, and resolved to return to Rome. It is idle to inquire into reasons for this change. But no sooner was he in Rome than he was again restless to be off. His fancy was inflamed with pictures of the reception he was likely to receive in the East. But now he thought he would begin with Alexandria. Alexandria had been the first place to acknowledge the divinity of Caligula, and there probably the inspiration would come on the appreciative people to see the godhead in himself. He ordered baths to be made ready in Alexandria, and then, hearing that the son of his old nurse had bathed in them experimentally, ordered his execution for having thus desecrated them.

The day for his departure was fixed. Processions were appointed to invoke the blessing of the gods on his expedition. As Pontifex Maximus, he used his privilege to enter the temple of Vesta, where burnt the sacred fire on which the safety of Rome depended. Therein he behaved outrageously, it was supposed; for the epileptic attack that came on him the same night at table, was taken as a judgment for his profanity. He fell from his seat, just as had Britannicus, but hung to his chair by his garments and did not crash on to the floor.

Now followed a short interval of melancholy, mingled with hallucinations. The journey to Egypt was abandoned. He issued an edict in which he stated that he sacrificed his own wishes for the welfare of his beloved capital. He had seen how sad men’s faces had grown when he spoke of leaving them, and how well aware he was that they looked on the presence in their midst of the head of the State as their guarantee for safety and prosperity.

But this melancholy stage was of short duration, and was followed by another fit of acute mania. It was probably in one of the accesses of this *furor* that somewhat later he kicked Poppaea, just as she was expecting to become again a mother, so that she died of the consequences.

A fever of suspicion, moreover, came upon him, and many lives were sacrificed to it. D. Junius Silanus Torquatus, who had been consul in A.D. 53, was impeached ‘because he was prodigal in bounties, and had no other resource for recruiting his impaired fortunes but revolution.’ He was sacrificed in reality because he was the son of Aemilia Lepida, and could therefore claim descent from Octavia, the sister of the first emperor.

In order to make plain to all Rome that he enjoyed himself nowhere so thoroughly as in the capital, Nero had a wondrous banquet contrived in the lake of Agrippa, the low portion of Rome by the Pantheon, easily flooded by the Tiber. Here he had wine-barrels put in the water, and a platform laid on them, upon which tables and

couches were placed; boats covered with ivory and gold were linked to the floating raft, and towed it about on the lake, whilst Nero and his guests supped on this raft on 'fowl and venison brought from afar, and sea-fish from the ocean.' Such crowds assembled to see the sight that many were trampled under foot, and crushed to death, in getting in and out of the taverns erected on the banks in which any one might drink of the best wines, and drink himself drunk, at the emperor's expense.

The crazy condition of the brain of Nero was even more clearly manifest in the great fire that took place soon after midsummer, and laid three quarters of Rome in ashes. On the night of the 19th July the fire broke out in the wooden sheds near the Circus Maximus—where are at present the gas-works—and where were stored large quantities of spices, oil, and various condiments, all combustibles, ready to ignite and spread the flames. The summer had been hot and dry, and a light air carried the flames over the whole quarter of wooden shops and stores. The *triumviri nocturni*, the watchmen of the city against such accidents, were nowhere to be seen; the conflagration rapidly grew; men were engaged in saving their own domestic treasures, no one tried to arrest the spread of the fire. The description given by Dio is even more graphic than that of Tacitus. He assumes what was conjectured, that Nero purposely had the city set on fire. 'He sent secretly people to different quarters, pretending to be drunk, or to be engaged on some prank. They set fire to one, then two, finally many houses, so that folk did not know which way to turn, as they could not strike at the seat of the mischief, and know how to grapple with it. Nothing was to be seen but fires in all directions, as in a camp, and naught heard but cries of "Here it blazes! There it blazes! Where did you say? Who is the incendiary? How came it about? Help!" All was in the wildest confusion. Men ran hither and thither; some sought to extinguish the conflagration, and whilst so engaged in one place received news that their own houses in another quarter were blazing. Some never heard that their own houses were on fire till they lay in ashes. Some ran out of their doors into the streets, to extinguish the flames from without; others burst into the houses to set them on fire. All shrieked and cried—men, women, children, old folks, in one vast confusion of sound, so that nothing could be distinguished for the noise, as nothing could be seen clearly for the smoke. Some stood silent and in despair. Many were engaged in rescuing their effects, whilst others were hard at work plundering. Men ran against each other, and quarrelled over what was drawn out of the burning houses; the crush swayed this way, that way, men thrust, and were thrust over. Many were trampled down, and every sort of wretchedness was to be seen; when one had escaped a danger of one sort, next moment he plunged into another of a different description, and was lost. This did not happen

on one day only, it lasted several nights and days. Many houses became a prey to flames, because no one would help to extinguish them; others were burnt because those who ought to have assisted were engaged spreading the conflagration; for the soldiers and watchmen did nothing for putting out the flames, they were occupied in plundering, and indeed sought to extend the fire.

‘Whilst this was going on at different points, a wind arose and spread the flames over the whole city. No one any longer thought of saving goods and houses; from a point of vantage, the city looked like several islands or towns in conflagration. None now lamented their individual losses; all wailed over the general ruin, and lamented the fate of the commonwealth.’

Tacitus adds that the wretched people ‘not knowing what to shun, or where to seek sanctuary, crowded the streets, and lay along in the open fields. Some, having lost all their substance, even the means of earning their daily bread; others, also despairing through the loss of their families, suffered themselves to perish in the flames, though they might have escaped. Neither dared any man offer to check the fire, so repeated were the threats of many who either openly threw fire-brands—asserting they were authorised so to do—or else hindered all attempts to master the flames.’

But it was uncertain, Tacitus admits, whether these incendiaries acted by order, or out of love of plunder. Nero was at Antium at the time—his native place—but hearing of the fire he came to Rome, and viewed the terrible yet magnificent scene from the highest point of the palace, united to the garden of Maecenas on the Esquiline Hill, the tower of Maecenas, the height ‘*molem propinquam nubibus arduis*,’ which Horace had sung, as well as the prospect from it (*Carm.* iii. 29). Excited by the spectacle, he dressed himself in some of his dramatic costume, and taking his lyre chanted the verses of Homer, descriptive of the destruction of Troy.

The conflagration lasted six days and seven nights. When it was in a measure got under, it broke out again in the gardens of Tigellinus, and continued three days longer. It was whispered that some one having in conversation with Nero quoted the line—

‘When I am dead, let fire the world consume,’

Nero had abruptly answered, ‘Nay, we will have it whilst I am alive.’ He had often complained of the narrow and winding streets; and coupling the known disposition of the tyrant with these reported sayings the populace convinced itself that he had purposely fired the city that he might rebuild it and call it after his own name. Near his palace were granaries, and it was told that he had catapults discharged against them to heighten the semblance of a siege, and finally had them set on fire by his own servants armed with tow, and consumed along with all their stores of grain.



When on the sixth day the conflagration was stayed at the foot of the Esquiline by the pulling down of an immense quantity of buildings, when the Carinae, the place of residence of the knights in former times, and a fashionable quarter, had been demolished, then the flames were arrested ; but only to break out again and rage for three more days in another quarter, as already mentioned.

It must be admitted that Nero acted with promptness and intelligence after the magnitude of the disaster was realised. 'For the relief of the people, left without habitation, he threw open the Field of Mars, and the monumental edifices erected by Agrippa, and even his own gardens (the Vatican). He likewise reared temporary houses for the reception of the forlorn multitude ; and from Ostia and the neighbouring cities household necessities were brought by water, and the price of grain was reduced to three sesterces the measure.'

Of the fourteen regions of the capital, only four remained unconsumed. In the rest there was either total destruction, or a few scorched and shattered ruins stood up above the ashes. 'The treasures accumulated by so many victories,' says Tacitus, 'the beautiful productions of Greek artists, ancient writings of celebrated authors, up to this time preserved entire, were now all consumed.'

It can never be decided whether Nero really caused the city to be fired, or whether the conflagration was due to accident. 'Psychologically conceivable, pathologically possible is it,' says Dr. Wiedemeister, 'that a maniacal emperor should have burned his old capital that he might rebuild it in greater splendour.' And Suetonius assures us that at the close of his reign he formed the scheme of again committing the rebuilt Rome to the flames, and of turning loose the wild beasts of the amphitheatre on the inhabitants, so as to produce a scene of wilder horror than the first. The impatience of a maniac would find the systematic reconstruction of the old city too slow. A good brisk fire would sweep it clear in a very brief period. As for compassion for the ruined people, and regret for the loss of treasures of art, such we must not look for in a man in his mental condition. However, the certainty that the conflagration originated with him is not proved. But that matters not ; it is sufficient for us to know that whilst the city was a prey to flames, the emperor comported himself as a madman, and with maniacal extravagance schemed the replacing of his scorched *Domus transitoria*. He effected this in the construction of his *Domus aurea*.

It is possible that the idea of the fire may have been suggested to him—supposing he did order it—by a play that had been enacted before him, composed by Africanus, in which the burning down of a house had been represented on the stage, with such reality that a real conflagration was produced, and the spectators were shown the inhabitants escaping through the windows and saving the furniture. Suetonius tells us that all the furniture and articles rescued from the burning house

were given to the actors who carried them off. It was during his former access of mania that he had seen this play. Now in the second maniacal fit, Rome was burnt, and popular opinion believed him to have brought it about.

It was, moreover, a significant fact that this fire of Rome took place precisely on the same day on which Rome had once before been burnt by the Gauls, a possibly accidental occurrence, but which might be more easily explained by such a theatrical madman straining to add effect to the tragedy.

Whether truly or falsely, the accusation was made, and Nero could not but perceive that the heart of the people was turned against him. It was in vain that he promised to rebuild their houses in a better manner, to indemnify the sufferers for their losses. It was in vain that the gods were addressed with prayer to mitigate the distress of the people, and were offered holocausts to turn away their anger; that the Sibylline books were consulted for expiations, and Juno propitiated by processions of Roman matrons, and by the sprinkling of her image with sea-water to cool her supposed resentment against the city. The sullen people continued to mutter imprecations against the 'incendiaries,' and though naming none, the significance of their looks could not be mistaken. Nero thought it advisable—or Tigellinus considered it so—that popular suspicion should be diverted into another channel. To effect this, Nero, says Tacitus, 'falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for the abominations they practised.' These men were looked upon with suspicion and dislike; they abstained from the circus and the theatre, would take no part in the riotous festivities that were given by the emperor, and they worshipped as their God one who had died on the Cross, a man guilty of high treason, for he had given himself out to be a King. When Tiberius retired from Roman society and hid himself quietly in Capreae, society avenged itself on him by inventing the most disgusting stories of his conduct in his retreat. So now the Romans resented the withdrawal of the Christians from the sanguinary scenes of the arena and the licentious performances on the boards, and declared that in their secret assemblies these sectaries were guilty of the most monstrous rites, sanguinary and obscene. They were declared to be inspired by an *odium generis humani*, to hold a 'pernicious superstition,' and to deserve death. The suspicion of the emperor was doubtless likewise kindled against them, because they met together in private, and he mistrusted all gatherings of guilds and societies as nests of sedition. Moreover, it was known that the Christians looked forward to the destruction of the world by fire, and had often spoken of it and threatened it. Was it not likely that, disappointed at the non-fulfilment of this prophecy, they had attempted to give it accomplishment in part by destroying the capital? So their

conduct could be represented to the people, and the anger of the citizens of Rome, bereft of their homes, be turned on the Christians instead of on Caesar.

‘Accordingly, first those were seized who confessed themselves to be Christians; next, on their information, a vast multitude were convicted, not so much on the charge of burning the city, as of hating the human race. And in their deaths they were also made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with the hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and, when day declined, burnt to serve for nocturnal lights.’

The First Epistle of St. Clement, written some thirty-five or six years later, alludes to some of the martyrs of this period: women, who like the Danaïdes, were given over to outrage; others, like Dirce, who were fastened to wild bulls and dragged to death; ‘and after they had suffered terrible and unspeakable torments, finished the course of their faith with steadfastness, and though weak in body received a noble reward.’

Tacitus was a boy of about seven years old at this period; he may have been taken to see the spectacle which Nero now gave to emphasise his resolution to represent the Christians as the authors of the conflagration. As they had burnt the city, they should be burnt themselves. He announced a great show at night in the circus in the gardens. These beautiful gardens at the foot of the Vatican Hill that folded round them were reached by the bridge Nero had built for his own convenience,<sup>1</sup> or by the long road, the *via Septimiana* from the Aemilian bridge. The gardens were adorned with statues, temples, fountains, baths, and porticoes.

In the cool summer night when a thousand fire-flies fluttered like wandering stars about the gardens, and clustered on the palm-leaves as threads of gems, suddenly numerous torches flared up in the circus, and the people rushed together to occupy every seat in the illuminated racecourse. There, through the whole length of the arena, stood stakes planted in the soil, with human beings—Christians—fastened to them, the sharp spikes under their chins. They were wrapped in papyrus, and in tow steeped in pitch and wax. To the flare of these living torches, and the shrieks of the sufferers piercing above the noise of musical instruments, Nero issued forth in his green costume, on an ivory chariot, and drove on the gold sand round the circus, attended by trains of Bacchantes and nymphs, waving wreaths and scattering incense.

These outrages on humanity exasperated Seneca, who had withdrawn to his villa, and in his fourteenth Epistle he writes in indignation at the atrocities committed. Tyranny, personified by the monster Nero, had steel and flame in hand, chains, and a host of wild beasts accompanying her. Conceive, he says, of prison, and cross, and rack, the

<sup>1</sup> Now in process of reconstruction.

iron hook, and a stake driven through a man and issuing from his mouth, of limbs broken under chariot wheels, of garments steeped in combustibles, and delivered over to the flames—of every horror the most savage imagination can devise. Tacitus also, though hostile to the Christians, admits the bad impression produced by this exhibition. Pity, he says, was roused for the sufferings of these people, although they richly deserved their punishment, for it was well understood that they fell victims not to the common welfare, but to the murderous lust of one monster.

After this horrible outbreak there followed a period of exhaustion; the reaction set in, and acute mania passed away, to be succeeded by melancholia. 'The exital stage of the second, and the initial stage of the third, attack, seem not to have been separated by any intervening period of saneness; at all events, we have no chronological data given us by the historians that can enable us to assert it.'

Nero retired from Rome and hid himself at Baiae. There he bathed and took his meals alone, without guards and without court. When he was in Rome he lived in retreat in his palace, did not show himself, and took exercise in his garden.

Meanwhile the reconstruction of Rome was proceeded with, with the utmost rapidity, according to the directions of the best architects; and at the same time Nero's Golden house was erected, and its grounds laid out on a plan of sumptuousness and size never surpassed.

The palaces of Augustus, Tiberius, and Caius, on the Palatine were united with the villa of Maecenas on the Esquiline, and the Caelian Hill was included in the park. Within the vast enclosure were groves, aviaries, vineyards, fountains, collections of wild and of tame beasts. Where is now the Colosseum was a great lake, and to give it the appearance of being something beyond a mere pond, Nero had houses grouped on its banks to represent towns and villages. Salt water was brought all the way from Ostia, and sea-fish were induced to swim in it. In splendid stalls stood the horses with which he raced, adorned with purple cloths, as though they were senators; and horses that had deserved well, received their monthly pensions. Asturco, his favourite mount, had its own palace and attendants. Not less comfortably provided for was the pet ape of Nero. For himself, says Tacitus, he founded a palace in which the old-fashioned and then common ornaments of gold and precious stones were not so much regarded as the lakes and gardens.

Above his lake stood the temple of Claudius, erected by Agrippina. He tore it down, and on noble arches brought the Aqua Claudia to a fall, down which in jets, and shoots, and foam and spray—something after the fashion of the waters of Trevi, but on a vastly larger scale—the Claudian stream discharged itself into his lake. Almost the only remains of Nero's vast building—certainly the finest fragments—are



those of this aqueduct that led to his fountains, now enclosed within the convent of the Passionist fathers on Monte Celio.

The Romans scoffed at the unprecedented extent of his enclosure, and spread about a lampoon—

‘All Rome will be one house; to Veii fly,  
And perhaps to Veii next ’twill reach.’

‘In parts,’ says Suetonius, ‘this house was entirely overlaid with gold and adorned with jewels and mother-of-pearl. The supper-rooms were vaulted, and compartments of the ceilings, inlaid with ivory, were made to revolve and scatter flowers; moreover they were provided with pipes which shed essences on the guests. The chief banqueting-room was circular, and revolved perpetually, night and day, in imitation of the motion of the celestial bodies. The baths were supplied from the sea and from Albula. Upon the dedication of this magnificent house, when finished, all Nero said in approval of it was, “Well, now at last I am housed as a man should be.”’

#### VII.—THE PISONIAN CONSPIRACY.

WITHOUT a lucid interval, Nero plunged from one access of frenzy into another. For a while the theatrical craze was thrust into the background by homicidal mania.

In the early spring a comet flared in the sky, and excited the terrors of Nero. He was at the villa of C. Piso at Baiae, but returned to Rome for the Circensian games, that were performed from the 12th to the 19th of April.

A. U. C. 818.  
A. D. 65.  
Act. 28.

He had been living very much at his ease, without guards, but now suddenly a panic seized him, and he drew a cordon of military about his person, declared the city in a state of siege, had the walls manned by soldiers, roads, river, and sea patrolled night and day; mansions, villas, country towns, searched by guards, amongst whom were introduced numerous Germans, as the suspicious madman feared the soldiers drawn from Italy.

The excuse for these measures was this:—

Flavius Scaevinus, a senator, had made his will, which was attested by a friend, Antonius Natalis, and sealed. At the same time he manumitted several of his slaves. That same evening, observing that an old family relic—a dagger, preserved in his bedroom—was rusty, he gave it to a slave, Milichus, and bade him apply it to the grindstone. He sat down to supper, but was not in his usual spirits, as is not to be wondered at, having just executed his will. Now Milichus was angry and dissatisfied, because he had not been given his liberty, and at night he grumbled over this to his wife. She at once represented to him that he had in his hands the means of revenge on his master. Let him go

to the emperor and declare that Scaevinus meditated his assassination. Milichus jumped at the suggestion, found a ready reception, and the train was fired that destroyed vast numbers of persons supposed to be implicated in the plot. Nero, alarmed at the comet hanging over Rome, had consulted an astrologer, Babilus, as to what it portended, and had received the reply that it portended the death of certain eminent persons in the state. Nero seized on the opportunity afforded him by



FIG. 111.—NERO. Basalt bust at Florence.

the revelation of the slave to proceed to the slaughter of some of the noblest of the Romans, so as to avert the menace of the star from himself.

It is a question that cannot be solved, whether a conspiracy really existed or not. Tacitus, Dio, and Suetonius, speak of it as having had some actual foundation; but Tacitus admits that a great many persons disbelieved in it, and thought it to have been fabricated, and 'that Nero had wrought the destruction of blameless men from motives of jealousy or fear.' Tacitus, however, states that those who were banished, and

returned after the death of Nero, asserted that there was a conspiracy. The senate was dissatisfied, the army disgusted, the empire impatient at the rule of a comedian, and desired a change. They felt that Rome was dishonoured in the person of Nero, and the pride in the dignity of Rome made all disposed to unite to shake off the incubus of the bad dream of Nero's rule.

But nothing much further than discontent and talk of a change can have existed; for, according to all accounts, C. Calpurnius Piso, set by the conspirators at the head of the movement, would have nothing to say to it. He was a man who belonged to a distinguished and wealthy family, but had no ambition beyond winning a game of dice or draughts. No two so-called conspirators, when put to the question, agreed as to the plans devised. According to one story, Nero was to be attacked and assassinated on the stage; according to another, the intention of the conspirators had been to waylay him among the passages of the palace during the conflagration of Rome—a statement bearing absurdity on the face of it, unless it were also part of the plot to burn the capital. According to another, again, a man of great strength, Lateranus, was to hold Nero down by his robes at the Circensian games, whilst others fell on him. Another version of the story, again, was that Nero was to have been assassinated at Baiae, and would have been so, had not Piso objected to it as an infringement of the rights of hospitality. Nor was the story of the dagger of Scaevinus told in the same way. According to one version it was an ancestral weapon, cherished as an heirloom; according to another it was one brought from the Temple of Salus. Nor was it at all settled to whom the empire was to be transferred. Some said to Piso, others to Seneca, and in a vague manner Antonia, the daughter of Claudius, and widow of Sulla, was an object of thought.

Tacitus alone gives us the details of the trials of those brought before Nero's camarilla, that consisted of himself, Poppaea, and Tigellinus, and from what he tells us, it appears probable that there was widespread dissatisfaction, that there were heartfelt desires for the death of the tyrant, and that suggestions were started relative to a change of dynasty, but that nothing was settled. Now 'there were incessant trains of chained prisoners haled along, who were kept waiting at the gates of the (Servilian) gardens; and when brought in to make their defence, it was found sufficient proof of guilt if any of these had smiled at meeting any of the conspirators—nay, even had spoken to them by chance, or had sat with them at the same table as guests, or had occupied the same bench at a public show.'

When one after another was dragged to the tribunal in Nero's palace, and subjected to torture, it became common for them to turn fiercely on their accusers and denounce them, and Lateranus was commended as differing from the rest in receiving his death-blow in silence

and not denouncing his delator. One woman showed courage that shamed men. Lucan, the poet, nephew of Seneca, moved by terror and hopes of pardon, gave up the names of many innocent persons, that of his own mother included; but the woman Epicharis, charged with having sounded Proculus, chiliarch in the fleet at Misenum, relative to the temper of the sailors, was tortured in vain. 'Neither stripes, nor fire, nor the rage of her tormentors—ashamed to be defeated by a woman—could overcome her constancy. The first day of torture passed without producing any effect on her. On the day following, as she was being brought back to suffer the same agonies, riding in a chair—for all her members were dislocated so that she could not support herself—she took off the girdle that was round her waist, made of it a noose, tied it to the canopy of the chair, put her neck in it, and hung herself. Thus she set an example, though only a freedwoman, of perishing rather than denounce others, and these strangers, almost unknown to her. Whereas, free-born persons, men, Roman knights and senators, before they were subjected to torture, were ready to betray their nearest and dearest.'

It would seem that even those who were engaged in the executions were uneasy. Fenius Rufus, captain of the guard, was confident in his security, and when another praetorian officer, Subrius Flavius, made a sign to him whether it would not be well to draw the sword and make an end to the butchery by slaying Nero, he shook his head. Shortly after he himself was accused by one of the victims and had to die.

When Fenius was charged with treason, he naturally adduced this as an instance of his fidelity; but it availed him nothing. At last, despairing of life, he said: 'Yes, I hate you. I did love you, and no soldier was more true to you when you deserved respect. But when you murdered your mother, then your wife, turned coachman, stage-player, and finally incendiary, I came to hate you.'

Nothing, says Tacitus, that any of the victims said made Nero wince as did these words of the blunt praetorian. When Fenius was bidden boldly extend his neck for the sword, 'Ay,' said he to the executioner, 'do thou strike as boldly.' When the man who had struck off his head returned to Nero, the tyrant asked if he had dealt the fatal blow. 'Yes,' answered the executioner, 'I finished him with a blow and a half.'

When Sulpicius Asper, a centurion, was brought before Nero and charged with meditating the death of the prince, 'I could not do you a better turn,' said the soldier, 'than cut short your dishonour.'

M. Vestinus Atticus was consul. None of those implicated had thought of accusing him; nevertheless Nero resolved on his destruction. Atticus was at supper, he had invited many friends, when suddenly the house was surrounded, and a tribune entered the dining-room and told him that he was expected to die. He retired to his



chamber, summoned his physician, his veins were opened, and he bled to death in his bath. Meanwhile, his guests were kept under guard in the supper-room till the night was far spent, when Nero, 'having pictured to himself and passed his jokes upon the terror of the men starting from table and expecting death, signified that they might go, "having paid dear enough for their consular supper."' "

Piso bled himself to death, leaving a will full of expressions of respect for Nero, and love for his wife—who, if Tacitus may be trusted, did not deserve it.

Seneca was the next victim. He had been in Campania, and was returning to Rome, but rested on his way in his villa at Nomentanum, when it was surrounded with soldiers, and the tribune entered as he sat at meat with his wife, Paullina, and two friends. He denied all privity in the plot. This was conveyed to Nero, who merely answered that he required Seneca to commit suicide. The tribune, disconcerted, on leaving the emperor consulted his commanding officer what was to be done, and was told to obey the imperial orders; a significant incident, for it shows how discontent had spread and sapped the allegiance of the soldiery. 'And this,' says Tacitus, 'prevailed universally.' Even when the tribune arrived at Nomentanum, he would not communicate the order in person to Seneca, but commissioned a centurion to convey it to the philosopher.

'Seneca, undismayed, called for tables to make his will; but as the centurion forbade this, he turned to his friends and said, "as I am debarred requiting your services, I leave you what alone remains to me—the example of my life." Then he sought to repress their tears and restore their fortitude, now by soothing language, then by using terms of rebuke, asking them where were the precepts of philosophy he had taught? Where the rules of conduct he had laid down? Who was unapprised of the ferocious disposition of Nero? What was to be expected of the man who had murdered mother and brother but that he should proceed to destroy his old tutor who had been as a father to him? Then Seneca embraced his wife; and after a brief but vigorous effort to master the qualms that pressed on him at that moment, he implored her to refrain from giving way to boundless grief, and to seek the consolation afforded by the contemplation of his virtuous life. Paullina, however, entreated to be allowed to die with him, and called for the executioner. Then Seneca, unwilling to hinder her purpose, both as glorious and also because he was uneasy for her future, exposed to the hard usage of the world, said to her, "I have pointed out to you how to soften the ills of life, but you prefer the renown of death. I do not grudge it you. Though we both die bravely, yours is the most glorious death."

'After this, both had the veins of their arms opened with the same stroke. As the blood flowed slowly from the aged body of Seneca,

attenuated by his spare vegetable diet, he had the veins of his legs and thighs also cut; and unable to bear up under the excessive pain,<sup>1</sup> lest by his own sufferings he should overpower the resolution of his wife, and lest he should be betrayed into impatience by witnessing her anguish, he advised her removal into another apartment. His eloquence continued to flow to the last moment of his life, and, summoning his secretaries, he dictated many things to them.

‘Nero bore no personal dislike to Paullina, and, to avoid inflaming public abhorrence of his cruelty, he ordered her death to be prevented. At the instance of the soldiers, her slaves and freedmen bound up her arms, and stanching the blood, but whether with her concurrence, is uncertain. Ill-natured people naturally said that she aimed at the applause of sharing her husband’s death so long as she thought Nero’s wrath implacable, but when convinced to the contrary she yielded to the attractions of life. But she gained thereby only a few years, ever cherishing a laudable recollection of her husband, whilst her face and limbs exhibited such deadly paleness that it was plain the vital energy had been drained away. Seneca meanwhile, as his blood flowed but slowly and death stole on lingeringly, asked his friend and physician, Statius Annaeus, to administer hemlock. When this was brought he took it, but it was in vain, his limbs being now cold, and his body insensible to poison. At length he had recourse to a warm-water bath, whence he besprinkled the slaves nearest him, saying that of this liquid he made a libation to Jupiter the Deliverer. From thence he was conveyed into a hot room and there suffocated with steam. His body was burnt without any funeral solemnity; for so he had directed in his will, having apparently foreseen his end even whilst in the plenitude of wealth and influence.’

There are busts, full of vigour and character, at Naples, in Florence, and elsewhere, of a man with eager, intelligent face, old, thin, with disordered hair and beard; that have long been supposed to represent Seneca, because of the likeness of the profile to one on a medal formerly in the possession of Cardinal Maffei, that bore the title of M. Annaeus Seneca on it. But unfortunately this medal is lost, so that it is not possible now to determine whether it was genuine.

In the Berlin Museum is a double Hermes representing on one side Socrates, on the other a bald-headed philosopher of not very interesting appearance, stout and bullet-headed. On these busts are cut the names of Socrates and Seneca, but cut not on the pedestals, but on the busts themselves, and, though the inscriptions are ancient, they are probably not of the same date as the busts themselves. Nevertheless, it is hardly likely that any other philosopher could have been intended by the sculptor to be set back to back with Socrates, and we may therefore regard the bronze *Herculaneum* bust and that at Florence as repre-

<sup>1</sup> Bleeding to death would produce agonising cramps.

sending some Greek, possibly Plato or Aristotle, but certainly not as the portrait of Seneca.

Another victim of this terrible year of butchery was Lucan, the nephew of Seneca, who did not save his life by his false denunciation of accomplices. He died in the same manner as his uncle, reciting with his last breath some lines of his own in the *Pharsalia*. Senecio, the friend from boyhood of the emperor, his companion in his early frolics, was also put to death; and many were banished and their estates confiscated. 'The children of those who had been condemned,' says Suetonius, 'were driven from the city, and afterwards either poisoned or starved to death. It is asserted that some of them, with their tutors and the slaves who carried their satchels, were all poisoned together at one dinner; and that others were not suffered to seek their daily bread.'

Then Suetonius goes on to say: 'From this period he butchered, without distinction or quarter, all whom his caprice suggested as objects for his cruelty, and upon the most frivolous pretences.' But as Tacitus informs us that a terrible pestilence raged in and about Rome at this time, 'sweeping away every living thing, and filling the houses with the dead and the streets with funerals,' it is probable that a good many if not all those whom the popular opinion declared to have been poisoned, fell in reality victims to the plague.

The butcheries were abruptly stopped in the most unexpected manner.

A certain crazy Carthaginian named Cesellius Bassus, who suffered from hallucinations, managed by bribery to obtain an audience with the emperor. Access to the person of Nero was difficult, so strictly was he hedged round with guards; however, Bassus surmounted all difficulties and succeeded in speaking to Nero himself, and informed him that 'on his estate in Africa had been discovered a cavern of vast extent, containing an incalculable amount of gold, not coined, but in shapeless masses. In one part of the cave lay gold blocks, in another stood bars of the shining metal. This was no doubt the treasure of Phœnician Dido, hidden there on her flight from Tyre.' One cracked brain inflamed the other, and without the slightest misgivings Nero made ready to send to Carthage and carry off the treasure. He did not think it worth while despatching men to test the truth of the story. He was elated at the prospect of the enormous wealth that was to pour into his treasury, and his extravagance, encouraged by these chimerical anticipations, became more excessive than ever. The Quinquennial games he had instituted were in course. It was five years since last celebration, but now his attention was distracted from the games to the prospect of acquiring the buried gold. A flotilla of warships was equipped and sent to bring home the treasure. Vast numbers of peasants were hired to dig the soil in search, under the supervision of Roman soldiers. Bassus pointed out the spot where it lay; but nothing could

be found. A second, then a third, spot was indicated, still nothing turned up under the spade and pick. Finally the entire estate was dug up, all to no purpose. It yielded nothing save stones. Bassus in despair and disappointment destroyed himself. Meanwhile, Nero was singing and strumming on the boards at Rome, and the minstrels who stood up with him chanted of the vast stores of gold that were coming to Rome. It was the theme of all their recitations, it was the talk of all the people, and it was the mockery of the wise. Nero emptied the treasury, scattering the money among the actors and singers, and the people who applauded him, in perfect confidence that the treasury would be speedily replenished. His expectations were dashed by the return of the fleet with empty holds, and immediately after, to his frantic despair, Poppaea died, in consequence of a kick he gave her in one of his fits of insane passion, shortly before she expected again to become a mother.

Her body was embalmed, not burnt, and laid in the tomb of the Julian family, and such a prodigious quantity of spices was burnt on the occasion, that Pliny says all Arabia did not produce in an entire year as much as was consumed on this occasion. Whether the peculiar deviation from 'the rites of the Romans' was due to Poppaea having been won over to the Jewish religion, or whether it was merely due to a caprice of Nero, is uncertain, but probably the latter was the case.

The disappointment of Nero at the failure of his hopes of raising a treasure at Carthage, combined with distress at having lost Poppaea, drove him into a second frenzy of murder. On the day of her funeral he sent orders to C. Cassius Longinus, a blind old lawyer, to forbid his attendance at it, and soon after he ordered his banishment because Longinus had in his house a bust of C. Cassius, his ancestor, the murderer of Julius Caesar, and it was inscribed 'the leader of the party.' Lucius Silanus, nephew of D. Torquatus Silanus whom he had put to death the year before, was banished, and a centurion sent after him to require him to commit suicide. The young man refused, and when fallen upon by the centurion and the soldiers defended himself with his naked hands till he fell, covered with wounds. Lucius Antistius Vetus and his mother-in-law, Sextia, and his daughter, Pollutia, widow of Rubellius Plautus, were ordered to die for no other reason than that they lamented the death of the worthy Plautus. Pollutia made a desperate effort to save her father by going to Naples and endeavouring to obtain access to the emperor; but it was in vain. She returned to tell her father that the monster was inaccessible to entreaty or remonstrance. Some persuaded Vetus—who, by the way, had been colleague with Nero in the consulship of A.D. 55—to bequeath to Nero the bulk of his estate, so that what remained might be allowed to pass to his grandchildren; but the worthy man declined the suggestion, as savouring of servility to a despicable tyrant. He distributed all his ready money among his servants, and bade them carry off everything portable in the



house, reserving only three couches for the funeral rites. They then opened their veins 'with the same knife, in the same chamber, each covered modestly with one robe only. They were then carried to the baths, the father's eyes fixed upon his daughter, the grandmother's upon her granddaughter, and hers upon both, each praying with rival fervour for a quick and easy passage for the soul, and to leave the others alive, though soon to follow. Fate followed the order of nature. Life was first extinguished in the elder, then in her who was as yet young.'

Other victims followed with the opening of the new year, Publius Anteius and Ostorius Scapula, the latter the son of the gallant general, and who had himself won a civic crown for having saved the  
 A. U. C. 819.  
 A. D. 66.  
 Aet. 29.

life of a Roman soldier in Britain. It is unnecessary to mention the names of more than a few of the most conspicuous victims who fell in this new access of cruelty and fear. Petronius, like Senecio, had been one of Nero's old comrades in boyish frolic. But among maniacs it is always noticed that they conceive the greatest suspicion against such as they have best loved and been with most intimately. It was so now. Petronius had been master of the sports to Nero, he was a witty, dissolute fellow, yet not without power of applying himself to business. On hearing that he was to die, he made presents to his slaves who deserved reward, and caused others to be punished who merited chastisement. He had his veins opened, then bound up and opened again; sat down to a plentiful supper, sealed a long narrative of the enormities committed by Nero of which he was witness, sent it to the tyrant, and then broke his signet lest it should be used in the fabrication of false evidence that might bring others to their death. As life ebbed, he revived for a moment to dash to pieces a costly murrhine vase, which he remembered that Nero had admired, and which he believed the prince purposed securing on his death.

'Nero at length,' says Tacitus, 'sought to destroy Virtue itself, in the persons of Paetus Thrasea and Barea Soranus.'

Paetus Thrasea had risen from his seat, when the senate had decreed thanksgivings to the gods for the murder of Agrippina, and had left the senate without giving his vote. He held aloof in disgust from the brutal and frivolous spectacles given by Nero, though ready to assist in his native city of Patavium in its harmless revelries. When the senate would have sentenced Antistius to death for scurrilous verses against the emperor, he had moved as an amendment that Antistius should be banished. When divine honours were decreed to Poppaea, Thrasea had held aloof. He had never offered sacrifice to the gods for the preservation of 'the heavenly voice' of Caesar; finally, he had a grave face and looked like a schoolmaster. Hitherto the victims of Nero had almost all been tried in camarilla by himself, Tigellinus and Poppaea, and when possible his victims had been forced to lay violent

hands on themselves. 'Such deeds,' says Dean Merivale, 'were not exhibited in public, such records were not written in contemporary history. The sensibility of that excitable populace was little affected by mutterings of horrors removed actually from their sight, or softened to their imaginations by lapse of time. This was no doubt the secret of Nero's policy, which enabled him to break all his pledges to justice and humanity, and gave impunity to crimes which posterity has so deservedly execrated. But in the cases now before us, the threats of the accusers seemed to be of no avail, and the emperor was prevailed upon to consent, not without apprehension, to the course of a public prosecution.'

The charges against Soranus were: 'his friendship with Rubellius Plautus; his having sought popularity in the administration of his province of Asia when proconsul, and with encouraging disaffection in various communities.' With him was accused his young daughter, not yet twenty, married to Annius Pollio who had been banished for supposed implication in the conspiracy of Piso. She was charged with having sold her bridal necklace and rings to raise money for the performance of magical rites.

'On hearing the accusation,' says Tacitus, 'she fell prostrate on the floor, and remained for long bathed in tears, and speechless. Afterwards embracing the altar she said, "I prayed to no evil deities. I used no spells. I did not seek anything else by my unhappy prayers than that you, Caesar, and you, conscript fathers, would preserve my best of fathers unharmed. For this purpose I did, indeed, abandon my jewels, as I would have yielded life and blood, had they been required. Anyhow, my father knew nothing of what I did. If it were wrong, I alone am the delinquent." Soranus, whilst she was yet speaking, caught up her words, and cried earnestly that when he was in his province his daughter was not with him, and that she was a mere child when he was intimate with Plautus. Then he ran forward to embrace his daughter, and she flew to meet him, but the consular lictors interfered and prevented them.'

Moving though this scene must have been, it did not affect the fathers in the senate, each of whom was trembling for his own life. Thrasea, Soranus, and his daughter Servilia were only so far indulged as to be allowed to choose their mode of death.

Suetonius says that Nero allowed but an hour to those whom he obliged to kill themselves, and that to prevent delay he sent them physicians 'to cure them at once if they lingered beyond that time.'

He threw out hints that he had no intention of sparing those senators who survived, and that he would extirpate the entire order. Moreover, elated at the readiness with which his atrocious orders were executed, he declared that 'no prince before himself had known the extent of his power.'

Here, abruptly—with the death of Thræsea, that brave Roman *sans peur et sans reproche*—the history of Tacitus breaks off. Our manuscripts of this portion of his Annals have come to us from a single fragmentary copy, ‘and the chance which has torn off some few leaves, perhaps, from the end of a volume, has broken the thread of a narrative, so painfully interesting, so solemnly instructive. The interest is common to all mankind who can sympathise in the sorrows and virtues of the noblest of their species; the instruction is for those who can gather from the agonising details the warnings or consolations they are fitted to impart.’ (Merivale.)

#### IX.—THE EXPEDITION TO GREECE.

For a period now we have some relief from horrors.

‘Paulum severae Musa tragoediae  
Desit theatris.’

An opportunity for great display took place, probably in the beginning of A.D. 66, which for a while turned the thoughts of Nero away from plots and secret enemies. This was the arrival in Rome of Tiridates, a claimant to the throne of Armenia to receive his crown and do homage for it. Arsaces XXIII., the Parthian, had invaded Armenia, taken Artaxata and Tigranocerta, the most important of its cities, about the time of Nero’s accession to the throne, and had given the crown of Armenia to his brother Tiridates. This provoked a long war in which success varied, but Domitius Corbulo, the Roman general, reconquered Armenia and expelled Tiridates, but no sooner was his back turned than it was again overrun by the Parthians, and finally Nero agreed to surrender Armenia provided that Tiridates would do homage for his crown. To this he agreed in A.D. 63, and he did homage to an image of the emperor set up in the camp of Corbulo. This, however, did not satisfy Nero, who insisted that the Parthian prince should come to Rome and make his submission before the whole Roman people. To this also Tiridates agreed, and three years after, he arrived in the imperial capital with a great train.

The phase of Nero’s derangement was at this time that for which the Germans have so expressive and untranslatable a term, *Grossenwahn*. The wildest projects revolved in his brain. He would seek out the sources of the Nile. He would make a campaign to Parthia itself and for ever crush these hereditary foes of the Roman power. He enrolled for this purpose a new legion of men six feet high, the ‘Alexandrian Phalanx.’ He would change the name of Rome to Nero-polis, and extend its walls to enclose Ostia. He would connect the city

A.U.C. 819.  
A.D. 66.  
Act. 29.

with the Avernian lake by a canal so wide that on it galleys might pass. He resolved on writing in verse the history of Rome, but debated as to the number of books of which it was to be composed, some number over four hundred, nothing under. Annaeus Cornutus was consulted on this project. 'Four hundred books are very many,' said he, 'too many for any one to read.' 'But Chrysippus wrote more,' said Nero readily. 'Yes,' answered Cornutus with incautious frankness, 'but they were of some good to the world,' an answer that ensured his banishment.

He forbade any one but himself to wear amethystine green or Tyrian purple, and having seen a lady at the theatre in the prohibited colours he had her dragged out of her seat, and her garments torn off her back, and he confiscated all her property. For himself, he fished with a net of purple and scarlet, richly set with gold. He thought it beneath his dignity to bet lower than 400,000 sesterces (£3000) on a cast of the die. Hearing that the Parthian prince was on his way, he ordered that he should be entertained lavishly and free of all charge on his route, at the cost of a million and a half of pounds in our reckoning. The sums expended on his guards, freedmen, actors, dancers, musicians, and buffoons amounted, according to Tacitus, to over sixteen millions of pounds. In all this we see the same craze as that which possessed the brain of his uncle. But there was a sombre grandeur, a barbaric magnificence, and a marked originality in the conceptions of Caius. There was nothing of the sort in those of Nero. He 'lusted after the incredible,' says Tacitus, 'but succeeded in only making himself ridiculous.' Caius had aimed at being a god, and Nero would outrival the deities of Olympus. He would drive better than the Sun, sing more divinely than Apollo, and wield a club with more dexterity than Hercules. He was above the duty of showing respect to the divinities of Rome. In a fit of alarm and timid superstition he did once seek the protection of the Syrian Astarte, but then renounced her protection and treated her image with bestial insult. At length the sole object of veneration to him was a sort of doll, from which he pretended to receive communications as to the future, and to which he cast some grains of incense every day, without knowing what the figure was intended to symbolise, or to what strange religion it belonged.

Nine months were spent by Tiridates on his way. He came with his wife and court, his sons and nephews. Before him marched three thousand Parthian guards, and behind a larger number of Roman veterans returning from the Eastern campaign. The queen wore a helmet that hid her features, and rode at the side of Tiridates, till they reached the confines of Italy, when, finding that Nero was at Baiae or Naples, with his train he took the Aemilian Way, through Picenum, and leaving Rome on his right hand went direct to Naples. There he was received. He bent on one knee and crossed his hands



over his breast before Nero, but, according to one account, stubbornly refused to resign his sword.

Great festivities were given under the management of Patrotus, a freedman. On one day only black people from Africa appeared on the stage. Then wild bulls were let loose in the arena, Tiridates called for a javelin, and with one blow wounded two of them. But the eastern prince turned away in disgust during an exhibition of gladiators fighting with their fists, when the victor stooped over his antagonist and killed him on the ground. 'That,' said Tiridates, 'is base play, to hit a man who is down.'

From Naples Nero made the Parthian accompany him to Rome, where a great spectacle was organised. The whole city was adorned with festoons and burning torches. Altars smoked and incense was wafted. In the forum a great dais had been erected for the Emperor. The troops in burnished arms and with their standards flashing in the sun like lightning surrounded the place. No one was suffered to enter the forum who was not robed in white and crowned with laurel. The roofs of the houses were so crowded that, says Dio, not a tile could be seen.

At daybreak Nero approached in triumphal garb attended by the senate and the praetorians, ascended the dais and seated himself on the ivory throne. Then entered a second procession, it was that of Tiridates in all the barbaric splendour of an oriental potentate. He and his attendants passed between the rows of soldiers till they reached the platform where sat Nero. The enthusiasm of the people broke out in thundering cheers, and for a moment Tiridates, unused to such explosions of feeling, was staggered, thinking that they demanded his death. But the heralds called to silence, and the prince recovered his composure. Bowing before the throne, he said, 'I, the grandson of Arsaces, brother of the kings Vologeses and Pacorus, appear before thee, my lord, as thy slave. I appear here to do thee honour as to my god, Mithras, and await the decision which thy divinity will come to as to my fate.'

Nero answered, 'Thou hast well done to come here, and suffer me to make thy acquaintance. What thy father left to thee and thy brothers have given thee, but which thou couldst not retain, that I freely give to thee, and name thee king of Armenia, to show to thee and to them that I give crowns to whom I will, and take them from whom I choose.'

After these words he signed that steps should be brought and placed before the tribune. By these the Parthian prince ascended, and as he knelt before Nero, the latter placed a crown on his head. This scene gave occasion to new bursts of applause from all quarters.

Then all adjourned to the theatre of Pompey, where Nero had had the proscenium and all parts visible to the eye plated over with gold

leaf. The awnings stretched above the pit to keep off the sun were of the forbidden Tyrian purple, embroidered in gold, with a representation of Nero driving the chariot of the sun, and all the rest of the awning was besprent with golden stars.

After the court had sat through a performance, a magnificent banquet was served, the prelude of what was to be the climax of the entertainment, for which Tiridates had been prepared by mysterious hints that he would see and hear something the like of which he might never hope to see and hear again.

What was the astonishment and disgust, however, of the proud Armenian king, when he beheld his host and liege lord strut upon the stage, twanging a lyre, and heard him shriek out a silly composition of his own in the tones of a peacock !

Hardly had he recovered from this exhibition, before Nero in a short green tunic appeared in the arena driving a chariot to which four horses were harnessed. When, heated and exultant, the fat sovereign waddled up to the royal box, and asked Tiridates what he thought of the spectacle, 'I have been thinking,' answered the Parthian dryly, 'what a remarkably good servant you have in Corbulo.'

The point of this answer was at the moment lost on Nero, but he turned it over in his head, and it cost Corbulo his life—the great general who had saved the honour of Rome in the East, and whose prowess had constrained Tiridates to do homage for his throne.

Tiridates returned to the East, and bore an invitation from Nero to Vologeses to visit him also. But Vologeses was not disposed to bend the knee to the coachman and comedian. The answer he sent was laconic. 'It is easier for you than for me to ship over the broad sea. When you are in the East it will be time enough for us to settle where we are to meet.' Nero actually purposed, as already mentioned, to go into Parthia. He had but to show himself, said he, and all opposition would disappear.

But now he was full of his deferred project of displaying his powers before the Greeks. 'Whoever,' says Dr. Wiedemeister, 'has had anything to do with those suffering from periodical mania, notices with growing surprise the remarkable uniformity in their accesses; each reproduces the same inclinations, passions, peculiarities, acts, and sayings of the patient. One access resembles another as one egg resembles another, with this difference only, that usually the extravagance grows in intensity. It was so with Nero. No sooner was the maniacal frenzy on him than he wanted again to rush on to the stage.'

The Neroniana had been instituted in A.D. 60, and in 65 they were repeated. The Senate would rather have above them as prince a cruel despot than a dancing mime, and it attempted to forestall his appearance in the games as a competitor, by voting to him the wreaths for music, poetry, and elocution. But Nero refused to be balked of his

purpose. He declined the prizes, and announced that he intended to contest them with rivals, and that he would receive them only when he had legitimately won them.

Then the Neroniana began. His name had been enrolled among the candidates as lyrist and singer, and like the rest he drew his lot from the urn to decide the order in which he was to perform. When his turn came he appeared on the stage attended by Faenus and Tigellinus, the two commanders of the praetorian guard, who held his lyre, and followed by the tribunes of the guard and his most intimate friends. When he took his place and had finished the prelude, he announced to the audience, through the consular, Cluvius Rufus, that he would sing 'the Niobe,' and he sang away till four o'clock in the afternoon, when the wreath was decreed to him by acclamation, and he adjourned the rest of the contest till the following year. As, however, he was impatient for the resumption of the games, he relieved himself by giving special performances to the Roman people in the interim. Then the audience were not spared. The energy and endurance of the emperor seemed boundless. He wearied out those who heard him long before he flagged himself. He looked about jealously to see who absented themselves and who showed signs of indifference or disgust. To be absent was a slight, not to applaud showed lack of loyalty, and such as failed to be present and to applaud were punished with banishment and confiscation of goods. No one might stay away, and no one being in the theatre might leave it. Women were confined during the interminable performances; men seated on the same benches day after day, and hour after hour, were chilled or prostrated with fever. Some, unable to endure the lengthy exhibitions pretended to die, and were carried out as corpses by their slaves. Among the spectators were soldiers planted at short intervals to keep order. The Augustals were in their places. Provincials and country-folk who did not understand that they were expected to simulate enthusiasm were poked in the ribs, or struck across the shoulders by the swords of the praetorians to stir them into rapturous applause. If they clapped their hands too soon or too late they were pointedly reminded to follow the claque. Some applauded till their hands refused to be longer thus employed.

At last the prince started on his journey to Greece. Lucian says that what drove him there was his passion for music, and the belief firmly rooted in his brain that even the muses could not sing like him. And he was resolved to win the crown at the Olympian contest. Some writers have supposed that he was actuated by a glimmer of political sagacity, that he was uneasy at the successes and power of Corbulo, and that he went towards the East with the avowed intention of visiting Asia and Egypt to confirm his power there and to disturb any plans of revolt that might be forming. But

that he had a political plan in his head is most improbable. He never showed himself either capable of appreciating real danger, or of taking a determined step to meet it when it appeared. His mind was at this period in a paroxysm of mania in which he believed himself to be something divine before whose light all opposition would disappear.

When it was announced that he was actually about to visit Greece, all the States hastened to proclaim that the contests which were recurrent in successive years at Olympia, Nemea, Delphi, and Corinth should be crowded into the space of time during which the emperor resided on Greek soil, so that he might achieve the distinction of being a *Periodonicus*, or victor in the whole circle.

He started, attended by courtiers and court followers of all descriptions, and with the cunning of a madman he invited as a favour to attend his triumphal progress all such members of the nobility and senate whom he had marked for death, that he might destroy them at his leisure and with more security at a distance from the city.

He left behind him in Rome a freedman, Helios, without definite instructions, but empowered to act as regent. That was a wonderful expedition. Dio says: 'He started for Greece not as had his predecessors, Flaminius, Mummius, Agrippa, and Augustus; but as a chariot-driver, a lyre-twanger, a herald, a dramatic performer in tragedies. His army that he led consisted not of the Augustians only but of so many that, as far as numbers went, he might have been marching against the Parthians. But these heroes under Nero's banner, in place of the weapons of war, brandished fiddles and fiddle-sticks, masks and buskins. And the victories won were worthy of the host; those subdued were not a Philip, a Perseus, an Antiochus, but a Terpnus, a Diodorus, and a Parmenes, a dancing-master, a fiddler, and a mime. Parmenes had enjoyed some fame in the time of Caius; now the old fellow was dragged on to the stage to give Nero the opportunity of triumphing over him, and as victor of upsetting his statues.

'If this had been all, he would have been laughed at for his pains. But it was intolerably humiliating for Romans to hear of, let alone see, the reigning emperor enter the lists against other candidates, practise his voice, go through rehearsals, march on to the stage with shaven chin and curly locks, and naked, with mantle cast back, attended by one or two companions only; and to see him glower at his rivals, attack them with contumely, bribe the judges and officers keeping order not to turn him out and to show him some favour—and all this to win the prize for lyre-playing when he was pitching away his credit as emperor. Could a disgrace be greater? Sulla degraded others; Nero degraded himself. Could a victory be more contemptible than one which was crowned with a few olive twigs, laurels, ivy, or fir—when he sacrificed for such the civic crown? How miserable must have been his appearance when he strutted forward on high buskins, and sank his imperial



dignity in the dust! Or when he put on his mask and cast off his sovereignty! What more contemptible than the parts which he picked out for himself; when he was led about as a blind man, simulated a madman, acted the part of a woman in travail, or of a vagabond. He spoke, moved, endured all, like a common strolling player, with one exception, that he wore, when taking the role of a captive, golden fetters, for he said it did not become a Roman prince to wear such as were of iron.'

'One day in the Olympian games whilst chariot-racing he was pitched out and almost run over, nevertheless he was crowned as victor, in thanks for which he made a present to the judges of two hundred and fifty thousand denarii. To the Pythian prophetess he gave a hundred thousand, because she pronounced an oracle that gratified him. But with Apollo he was so irate because his oracle was unfavourable, that he killed a number of men and flung their carcases into the cleft out of which the sacred vapour rose. In all those places where there were contests he strove for the prize, employing the consular, Cluvius Rufus, as his herald, who trumpeted forth the announcement, "The Caesar Nero has conquered in this contest also, and crowns the Roman people and the Universe!"'

He excepted Sparta and Athens from his visits. The laws of Lycurgus were not to his taste, and therefore he did not go to Lacedæmon; and he was afraid lest the wrath of the avenging Athene should light on him for his murder of his mother, if he entered the city sacred to her. Moreover, he shrank from initiation into the Eleusinian mysteries, from a sense of his unworthiness, or rather from fear of the consequences.

The first Greek island on which Nero had landed was Corcyra, and there he initiated his tour of performances by a song sung before the altar of Jupiter Cassius.

At Olympia there was no theatre, only a hippodrome; Nero had it adapted for his dramatic performances as well as for horse-racing. Before he entered on a contest he showed the greatest deference to the judges, and assured them 'he had done all in his power to prepare for the ordeal. The result was in the hands of fate. He requested them, as men of taste and culture, to overlook all accidents and consider the general perfection of the performance.' But though they encouraged him, he was afflicted with nervousness or suspicion, and thought that any reserve in the umpires was a token of disaffection. In every particular he obeyed the rules laid on dramatic performers, not to spit, nor blow his nose, and to use his sleeve only for wiping the sweat from his brow, nor to seat himself, however weary he might be. As on one occasion in the course of tragic declamation he dropped his staff, he trembled with nervousness lest through this accident he should forfeit the prize; and he could only be pacified when the mime who accompanied him

on the cithara swore to him that no one had observed it, so engrossed were all in admiration of his voice.

But he was not content with even the loud voice of Cluvius, as his herald. He competed with others as to who could bellow loudest, and having gained the victory in this also, he took to announcing his own victories himself.

It was noticed that he particularly affected acting female parts, which gave occasion to many jokes; but it would seem, as has been suggested by Dr. Wiedemeister, that this as well as other eccentricities of a like nature noted at this period, were due to a phase not uncommon among madmen, that of actually believing themselves to have changed their sex.

On reaching Corinth, nothing would content him but that he must cut through the isthmus. The idea of uniting the Ionian and Adriatic seas had been mooted before, and had been entertained by Demetrius, by Caesar, and by Caius. Nero undertook the task, not from any consideration of utility, but to show that he could do what others had failed to accomplish. 'He thought,' says Lucian, 'on that old Achaean king who, on his expedition against Troy, passed through the canal he had dug between Chalcis and Aulis, and had cut Boeotia from Euboea; on Darius, who had cast a bridge over the Thracian Bosphorus, in his expedition against the Scythians; and even more on the undertaking of Xerxes, in its magnitude never equalled. Beside all this he conceived that he would be giving no grander boon to all Greece than by removing the small impediment which interfered with the traffic between Greece and Italy. For, however intoxicated and disorderly the capricious power of tyrants may make them, there are moments when it does occur to them to do something great by which they may become famous.'

The day on which the first sod was turned was appointed to be a great festival. The emperor left Corinth, where he was then residing, at the head of a great train. On the morning he issued in gorgeous apparel from his tent. First he snatched up the lyre and sang a hymn in honour of Amphitrite and Neptune, and threw in as well an ode on Leucothea and Melicertes. Then the praefect of Greece handed him a golden spade. Amidst shouts and the strains of music he turned three clods, collected the earth in a basket, put it on his shoulder, and after having made a magniloquent address to the labourers, returned in triumph to Corinth, as pleased with himself as if he had performed the twelve labours of Hercules. The work was begun energetically; innumerable labourers had been collected on the spot. Vespasian had sent him six thousand sturdy young Jews for the purpose; and the gaols of the empire had been emptied to furnish him with a sufficiency of workmen. However, after five days of work, Nero's interest cooled, was turned in another direction—and the undertaking was abandoned.

Those about his person hastened to find excuses—bad omens were easily manufactured—to cover the retreat of the emperor from a task begun with such a flourish and so speedily given up.

A year and a half were spent by Nero in Greece. The expenditure was enormous, and to supply his private treasury he had recourse to plundering temples of their stores of precious metal, and what was worse, to the execution of wealthy men, that he might possess himself of their fortunes. His progress through Greece, says Dio, was like that of a conqueror over a subjugated land. 'He plundered it to exhaustion, and had men, women, and children murdered. At first he required the children and freedmen of those whom he sentenced to death to give him half what his victims had left; and those condemned were allowed to make wills so as to let it appear that they were not put to death for the sake of their fortunes. But presently he took to himself either all or the major part, and finally he swept the whole into his pocket, and by a decree banished all the children of his victims from the country. But even that did not content him, and he had many of them assassinated in their exile. It would not be possible to form an estimate of the sums he took from those whom he allowed to live, and drew from the Roman temples. Messengers were flying in all directions with no other commissions than sentences of death. Indeed no letters passed among people then, the post being entirely occupied by the imperial correspondence.'

A. U. C. 820.  
A. D. 67.  
Aet. 30.

And to make the situation the more grimly ludicrous, in emulation of Flaminius Nero had proclaimed the freedom of Greece.

Nero had, as Tiridates had informed him, an excellent servant in Corbulo, a brilliant officer, popular with his soldiers, and of repute throughout the East. Had Corbulo willed it, he might have raised the standard of revolt, but he had never swerved from his fidelity to Nero. He was now repaid by Nero recalling him to Greece and ordering him to commit suicide. Without murmur or resistance he plunged a sword into his heart, exclaiming as he struck the blow, 'Rightly served!'

Of this brave and honourable man several portrait busts exist; that in the Capitoline Museum closely resembles a bust found in 1792 at Gabii, in a temple erected by the empress Domitia Longina to the memory of her father, this same Corbulo. This bust is now in the Louvre. Another bust is at Florence,<sup>1</sup> another in the Hermitage at S. Petersburg, and another at Berlin, this latter, however, badly restored. Another in the Town Museum, Périgueux. That in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, is only possibly a Corbulo. The genuine busts represent him as an old man without beard, with hair still thick on his head, worn, in the Louvre bust, drawn over his brow

<sup>1</sup> Where it passes as Cicero.

like that of Brutus. The face is oval, pointed at the chin. The cheek bones are high, the eyes contracted and small; two deep furrows descend from the nostrils to the angles of the mouth, but do not encircle the mouth, and meet under the chin, as in the busts of Claudius. The lips protrude and the chin is marked and blunt. There is the decision of a general in the mouth; a look of dissatisfaction in the face, but not one of unkindness. The brow is lacking in breadth. In age he appears to be about seventy; and this leads us to believe that Corbulo the general is identical with the praetor in A.D. 21, and the consul in A.D. 41, an identification which has been doubted by some.<sup>1</sup>

Fifteen years after his death his beautiful daughter, Domitia Longina, whose portrait is one of the most pathetic that has come down to us, was elevated to be the unhappy wife of the tyrant Domitian.

Two other provincial governors shared the fate of Corbulo. These were the brothers Rufus and Proculus, of the great Scribonian house; they had commanded in Upper and Lower Germany, and had done nothing to incur the suspicion of the emperor save that they were beloved by the military. They were recalled and compelled to commit suicide.

Nero did not forget, whilst in Greece, the reconstruction of Rome and its adornment. Vast collections of statuary, the spoil of Greece, had perished or been injured by the flames in the great conflagration. He utilised his expedition to the nursery of the plastic art to pillage it of what had been left by former depredators. The temples, the forums, even private mansions were ransacked to supply the vacant pedestals of Rome. What Nero could not carry away he put up to auction to the highest bidder, or suffered the unhappy owners to redeem at exorbitant prices.

In the meantime in Rome the hand of tyranny had not been relaxed. The emperor had consigned the government of Italy to Helios, his freedman, and had left him to supply himself with the means whereby to maintain the government by the usual process of confiscations. The nobility were decimated and impoverished. Many of the ancient families, illustrious in the annals of the past, had become extinct, and of those which had taken their places, the sword and the poisonous draught were rapidly thinning the numbers. The places of the great Romans were taken by manumitted slaves, both as governors of provinces, and as millionaires at home. Yet, however much the Romans might acknowledge their desperate position, they knew not in which direction to look for redress. The praetorians were in the pay of the emperor, and so long as they were content, the senate and people were powerless. Among the governors of provinces they did

<sup>1</sup> On account of a passage in Tacitus, *Ann.* iii. 31; see Furneaux's *Tacitus*, on this passage, note 5. But his age may have been only relative to that of Sulla; he was praetor 30.



not know which to choose, and which would be ready to rise. Nero was the last of the blood of Augustus, and they hoped when he had danced and stormed out his span of life, in default of another representative of the Augustan house, the republic might be re-established.

#### X.—THE END OF NERO.

IN Rome, Helios was neither unobservant of the mood of the citizens and soldiers, nor neglectful of giving notice to his master. He might perhaps have passed over the discontent of the nobles as chronic, and that of the rabble as fleeting, but he saw that dissatisfaction was spreading among the soldiery. The generals and procurators in the provinces had felt at ease whilst Nero danced and sang, and had not entertained alarm on their own account when he put to death many of the foremost members of the aristocracy. But when he cut off his ablest and truest military commanders, each became fearful for his own safety, and each sounded the soldiers under him to ascertain whether they could be relied on in an emergency. The praetorians in Rome, moreover, were disaffected. They felt the indignity of serving under a prince who made himself ridiculous in the eyes of barbarians. With cruelty and oppression they were familiar, deeds of blood sent no shudder through their consciences, nor revolted their sense of justice, but such a breach of decorum, such flagrant defiance of the social traditions as had been manifested by Nero, filled them with indignation and impatience. Helios despatched to his master a warning of the symptoms of danger he observed both at home and in the provinces, and urged his speedy return to the seat of government.

A.U.C. 821.  
A.D. 68.  
Act. 30½.

But the fit of exaltation was still on Nero, he could not realise that he was in danger; he wrote back: 'You admonish me to present myself again at Rome; nay, but you should rather dissuade me from returning until I have reaped my full harvest of rewards.'

At length, finding Nero regardless of his appeals by letter, Helios crossed over into Greece, and with much difficulty induced him to set his face towards Rome. The weather was stormy. It was probably the end of February when Nero started, and fervent prayers were put up that the waves might engulf him.

Before leaving Greece he inquired of the Delphic oracle, and was assured that he was menaced with danger, and must be on his guard against 'the seventy-third year,' a response that did not greatly alarm a youth of thirty.

He returned with 1,808 chaplets, which he had won, not as a conquering hero in war against the kings of the East, but as a victor in the games against Greek freedmen.

How was it, it may be asked, that he had never descended into the arena and fought with gladiators? It was indeed his intention, having out-rivalled Apollo, to surpass also Hercules, and a lion was drugged or gorged to suffer itself to have its brains knocked out by the club of Nero. But he never adventured himself against his fellow-men armed with sword, and trident, and net. Therein he showed a prudence hardly to be looked for in a madman.

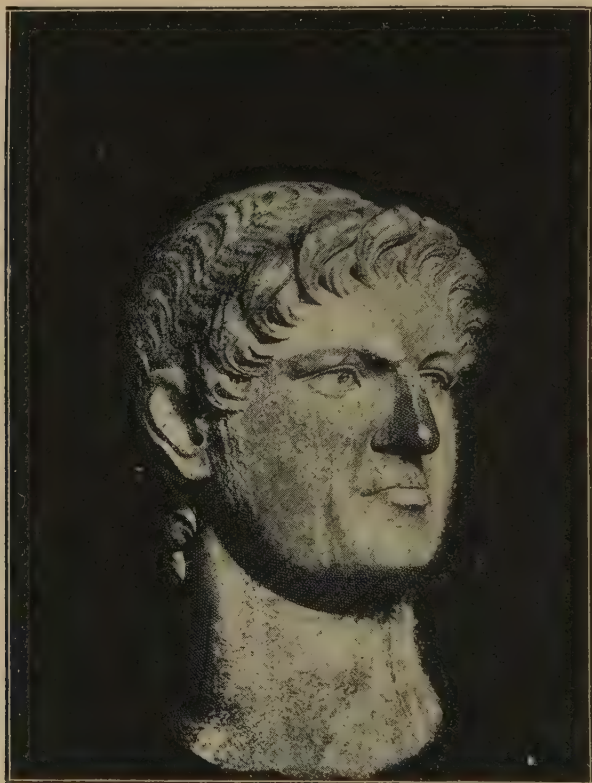


FIG. 117.—NERO. Bust in the British Museum.

He conveyed with him in ships many artistic treasures of Greece; but some of the vessels were wrecked. 'It matters not,' said Nero confidently, 'the fishes will bring them to me when I reach Puteoli.'

After the loss and recovery of both Britain and Armenia, his confidence in his good fortune had become unbounded. He went direct to Naples, on reaching Italy, and entered it in procession. The city wall was broken through that the Periodonicus might enter in his triumphal car drawn by white horses. He was there on the 19th of

March, the anniversary of the murder of his mother, when a despatch was put into his hand announcing the revolt of C. Julius Vindex, governor of Gaul, who took up arms, not for himself, but in favour of Sulpicius Galba, governor of Spain. He paid no attention to the letter, but went off at once to the amphitheatre to see a fight of gladiators. At supper further tidings of an alarming nature arrived, but these also he totally disregarded, and remained eight days lingering in Campania, without deigning even to speak of the insurrection that had been announced to him, more than that he threw out the threat on one occasion of treating the traitors with severity.

Nothing roused him even to acknowledge and answer the letters he received, till the proclamation of Vindex was put into his hands, in which Nero was spoken of as 'a wretched fiddler.' That touched him in the only susceptible place, and he wrote off with his own hand a letter to the senate, requiring it to exact satisfaction for this insult. Passing over all other accusations, he laid hold of the charge that he was a bad musician, and disputed it with vehemence; he asked those about him whether they knew any one who was a more accomplished musician than himself. He apologised for not immediately returning to Rome, because he was somewhat hoarse—as though the only purpose of his seeking the capital again was that he might indulge it once more with a sample of his singing powers.

After a while Nero started leisurely on his return to Rome. Eighteen hundred and eight heralds preceded him, bearing in their hands the crowns he had won, each followed by another, who held aloft a placard on which were inscribed the place and date of the victory, and the names of the opponents defeated by Nero; and beneath each was written: 'Nero is the first Roman who has, from time immemorial, won this prize.' Then he followed in his triumphal chariot. In like manner as he had made his *debut* in Naples, so did he enter his native town of Antium; so also Albanum. But most splendid of all was his entry into Rome. He was in the highest spirits; for he had passed a monument on which was represented a Gaulish soldier defeated and dragged by the hair by a Roman knight. He accepted this as a favourable omen, and leaped for joy in his chariot.

The triumphal car in which he entered Rome was that in which Augustus had ridden. He wore a purple robe, embroidered with gold; a chaplet of olive on his head, and he carried the Pythian wreath of laurels in his hand. Beside him stood the harper Diodorus. The houses were decorated with festoons; the streets had been strewn with saffron; singing-birds, comfits, flowers, were thrown by the people as he passed. The city was full of fragrance all the day, and was brilliantly illuminated at night.

The prince was saluted by thousands of voices shouting, 'To the Olympian the Pythian conqueror! To Augustus, Augustus! Hail,

Nero, the true Hercules! Hail, Nero, the true Apollo! Hail, Nero, the only Periodonicus! The only one that ever was! Hail to thy divine voice! Blessed is he who heareth thee!

Behind him marched the Augustians, and the guard returning with him from Greece, crowned also with chaplets, as though sharers in his victory. The procession passed through the Circus Maximus, some arches of which were demolished to admit it, and thence by the Velabrum and the Tuscan Street into the forum; then, by the Via Sacra, reversing the order taken in military triumphs, he ascended by the *clivus* to the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine Hill. On reaching his palace, he had the sacred crowns suspended about his bed-chamber, and caused statues of himself to be erected in the attire of a harper, and medals to be struck representing himself in the same costume.

To this period belong, we may presume, the statues of Nero idealised as Apollo. Such a bust, larger than life, much repaired, belonging originally to a statue, is in the Vatican, in the Hall of Busts, No. 278.

If the senate or his ministers expected that he would now attend to business, and take measures against the Gallic insurrection, they were speedily undeceived; for his first announcement was that the Circensian games should begin, when, of course, all matters of state must stand aside.

To spare his voice for the coming exhibition, he communicated all his commands to the soldiers through an intermediary; his singing-master never left his side, to caution him against overstraining his vocal organ, and to avoid draughts, and keep a muffler over his mouth.

The Circensian games began, and the eighteen hundred and eight chaplets were brought out again and hung on the Egyptian obelisks in the circus. The emperor in his green dress raced as usual, but allowed himself occasionally to be beaten, so as to give a semblance of reality to his other victories. There seemed to be no end to the races. The energy and enthusiasm of Nero were inexhaustible. At length his attention was diverted into another channel by a certain Lydian, who humbly entreated the emperor to allow him the honour of hearing him sing and twang the lyre. If this grace were accorded him, he professed himself ready to present to the emperor the sum of—in our money—£7000. Nero rose to the bait at once. The thoughts of horse-racing made way for those of singing and strutting the boards. He sang Oedipus in exile, but when he came to the verse—

‘Wife, mother, father, goad me on to death,’

suddenly he turned giddy and fell.

In the audience the malicious whisper passed from bench to bench: ‘His singing has roused the *cocks* (gallos),’ *i.e.* the Gauls.

All at once, in the middle of the night, messengers flew about the city to summon the senators to the palace. Thinking that tidings of



moment had come from Gaul relative to the insurrection of Vindex, they hastened to the Palatine. There they found Nero in great excitement. 'I have found out at last,' said he, 'the expedient by which a water-organ can be made to produce a louder tone.' Then he explained to them the contrivance, showed them the mechanism, and promised to give an exhibition of it, 'that is,' he said, with a laugh, 'if Vindex will suffer me.'

When news arrived of the failure of the attempt of Vindex, and of the death of the rebel, he vowed he would have games surpassing those already given. He would appear naked before the people, and strangle a lion in his arms; he would show off his powers on the water-organ, on the flute, and on the bagpipes; and on the last day he would dance in the ballet of 'Turnus.'

Though Vindex had fallen, the insurrection gained ground. Nero assumed the consulship alone, and then gave an entertainment in the palace, at which he appeared walking round the hall, leaning on the arms of his friends, and assured all present that he intended to visit Gaul, advance to meet the mutineers, and weep so piteously that their hearts would melt. Then, when they were brought to repentance, he would institute public rejoicings, and, 'by the way,' said he, 'I must set to work at once to compose my songs for the occasion.'

He prepared for this Gallic expedition in his own fashion. He ordered a number of conveyances to be got ready and laden with his various theatrical properties, masks, buskins, herald's staves set with pearls, his musical instruments, etc. Then he ordered all the ladies of his harem to have their hair cut short, and he armed them with toy axes and shields, and said that so he would have a company of Amazons. Then he sent to the city-tribes to enlist; but as no qualified persons answered the summons, he ordered all masters to furnish him with a certain number of their slaves—the best they had—including their stewards and secretaries. Next he commanded every order of the people to be heavily taxed; all tenants of houses to pay into the exchequer forthwith one year's rent; but again he met with sullen opposition.

At this time a vessel arrived from Alexandria, and as the corn supplies were running short, it was hoped that the ship had brought grain. When, however, it was discovered that it was laden with sand for the arena, the people were roused to fury, howled under his windows, and treated Nero with contumely when he appeared in public. On one of his statues was placed a small chariot with an inscription, 'I have a race to run. I am off.' On another was hung a leather sack and a ticket: 'What shall I do?' under which was the reply, 'The sack of the parricide is thy desert.'

Tacitus is not clear as to what was now done. Apparently Nero summoned troops from Illyricum for the defence of Italy, but found

that they were already in correspondence with the soldiers he had hastily got together and had placed under the command of Rubrius Gallus, who, it soon appeared, was preparing to make terms with Galba.

News arrived next that Galba and the Spanish legions were marching towards Italy. Thereupon the prince fell down in an epileptic fit, and lay for a long time speechless. He passed at once from his confident mood into one of melancholy and despair. He dreamt that Octavia appeared and dragged him down—down into a fathomless abyss. Then he fancied that he was covered with legions of flying ants; then that all the statues in Pompey's theatre came out of their niches and descended from their pedestals, and surrounded him. He fancied that his favourite Spanish jennet was transformed, so that its hinder parts were like those of an ape, and that it ran up to him neighing melodiously, like the musical Alexandrian applause that had so taken his fancy. He fancied, or was told, that in the night the doors of the mausoleum of Augustus had flown open, and that a loud voice had pealed from it, calling him by name.

Trembling, he hastened to consult the omens, when the boy, Sporus, who attended him, handed him a ring, and on the gem he saw engraved Proserpine being borne off to the Nether World.

He ran into the senate-house beating his head and tearing his clothes, crying out, 'It is all over with me!' Then he threw himself on the compassion of his old nurse, saying, 'I am beyond all example wretched, for I have lost an empire whilst still alive.' He was taken to the theatre to divert his gloom. There seeing an actor applauded, he sent him word, 'Now you have it all your own way, because I cannot act on the stage any more.' Frantic ideas of revenge flashed through his disordered brain. He would have all Romans in banishment everywhere massacred. He would order the butchery of all Gauls in Rome. He would invite the senate to a feast and serve them with poison. He would fire the city again, and turn loose on the people all the wild beasts. What he might have done, had he still been surrounded by servants amenable to his orders, cannot be said; but already soldiers, slaves, senate, were deserting him.

As he was sitting in downcast mood and silent at dinner, tidings arrived that all the legions in the provinces had declared against him. In a paroxysm of fury and terror he kicked over the table, tore the letters to pieces, and smashed two valuable cups he had because of certain Homeric lines upon them that were ominous.

He had relied on the Delphic oracle that assured him he had to fear only the seventy-third year, and now he learned that Galba, proclaimed emperor by the troops, was in his seventy-third year. Gathering together a little resolution, or prompted by Tigellinus, whose fate was bound up with his own, he sent further appeals to Illyricum for soldiers, but with no result. What troops he could

muster he despatched under Rubrius Gallus to meet the advancing Galba, but, when they showed that no reliance was to be placed on them, he was for going on board the vessel that had discharged its freight of fine sand, and flying to Alexandria. 'If I do lose my sovereignty,' said he, 'I can yet earn my livelihood by my art.' He ordered his guard to attend him to Ostia, and fly with him. They refused. They would go with a dauntless leader to death, but not run with a coward. 'Is it then so very hard a matter to die?' said one sneeringly. He sought the hag Locusta, renowned for her poisons, and made her give him a deadly powder which he enclosed in a golden casket. Then he crossed over the Tiber to the Servilian gardens, and sent a freedman to secure a galley at Ostia.

The night was that of the 8th of June, hot and still. The emperor could not find Tigellinus; he had fled. What had become of Helios we do not hear. Nymphidius, left in command of the praetorians, withdrew to the camp, and entered into communication with the senate.

The emperor retired to his bed, but could not sleep. The door of his chamber flew open of its own accord. About midnight he rose, and, leaving his room, wandered about the corridor in deadly anxiety, looking for a servant or friend. All was hushed. No tramp of the sentinel was to be heard. The palace was deserted. Guards, freedmen, courtiers of every kind, servants and attendants, mimes and mountebanks of both sexes had fled or withdrawn. He knocked at every door, but received no answer. Returning to his bedroom he found that the brief moments of his absence had been utilised: some slave had crept in, stolen his jewels, and carried off the poison for the sake of the gold box that contained it.

Again he wandered about calling for help; and now at last the boy Sporus appeared, and then the freedman Phaon and a couple of slaves. 'Fetch me Spiculus,' ordered the wretched prince. Spiculus was a gladiator. He sent for him that he might die by his hand. But that fellow also was gone. 'I have neither friend nor foe left!' wailed Nero. Then he ran out, declaring he would throw himself into the Tiber. But the dark water gurgling by repelled him, and he returned to the palace asking for some hiding-place. Phaon named his villa situated between the Via Nomentana and the Via Salaria in the direction of the Anio.

A hope dawned in the heart of Nero. He disguised himself in an old dress, the worst horse in his stable was brought to him, and he mounted, with a hood drawn over his head, the inseparable kerchief with which he muffled his throat held up to his face, partly to disguise it, and partly still no doubt with some thought how bad for the voice the night air might prove. In his slippers he rode forth, attended by Phaon, Sporus, and Epaphroditus, his cabinet secretary. The summer

lightning was flashing over the Alban hills. An earthquake shook the city, and to the frightened emperor's imagination, the ghosts of all those whom he had murdered rose from the reeling earth, lined his path and pointed at him.

The way lay close to the praetorian camp. On the old horse Nero mounted the steep, basalt-paved Alta Semita that led up the Quirinal hill, and as he ascended the hill the clouds rolled dense over the sky. On nearing the Nomentane gate, he could hear that the praetorians in the camp hard by were awake and in agitation. A lightning flash flared out of the sky and struck the road before the flying emperor. Passengers were in the street. 'See there!' shouted one, 'these fellows are in pursuit of Nero.' Another coming out of the country arrested the fugitives to know the news. Suddenly the horse Nero rode started and plunged at a corpse that lay in the way, and the kerchief fell from before the emperor's face. A passing praetorian recognised the Caesar and hastened off to the camp to report what he had seen.

There was need for haste. He left the Via Nomentana with his attendants and took a side lane, dismounted, let the horse go, and hurried across country among bushes and thorns, and got into a footpath that traversed a rush-grown marsh. Along this the attendants of Nero got him with difficulty, and only by spreading their cloaks on the soft, oozy soil.

So they reached the wall of the back part of the villa. Here he remained till morning dawned, not daring to speak to his companions, or they to him. 'When a dog barked,' says Dio, 'or a bird twittered, when a twig stirred, he shivered with fear. He sighed and sobbed to himself, murmuring incessantly the line of the poet:—

'Father and wife bid me, most wretched, die!'

As the air turned cold towards morning, Phaon urged him to creep into one of the sand-pits near, but he shuddered and refused, 'No,' said he, 'I will not go underground whilst alive.' With hollowed hand he scooped some stagnant water out of the marsh to quench his fever-thirst; 'And this,' said he, 'is Nero's distilled water.' As his cloak was torn by the brambles, he pulled out the thorns that stuck in it. Meanwhile, Phaon had been into his villa and had knocked a hole through the wall at the back. Through this, on all-fours, crawled Nero, and was then hidden in the nearest closet, where he threw himself on a miserable pallet, with an old coverlet cast over it, and, being hungry and thirsty, though he refused some coarse country bread that was brought him, he drank a little tepid water. His faithful attendants now pointed out to him that life was not possible, and it would be the better way for him manfully to accept the fact and put an end to himself.

'Well then, dig my grave,' said he, 'but line it with marble, and go fetch water and wood, that my body may be washed and burnt.



O Zeus! what an artist is lost in me!’ In rushed a messenger of Phaon’s with a letter. Nero snatched it from his hand, tore it open, and read that the senate had met, had declared him an enemy of the state, and had given orders that any one who found him was to deal with him after the ancestral manner.

‘And what is that?’ asked the emperor, who either in his present condition had forgotten, or having cared so little about the laws had never learned what the punishment was. It was explained to him that the traitor’s head was put into a forked stick, and he was stripped and whipped to death. When Nero heard this he trembled, and catching up a pair of daggers tested their points and laid them aside again, saying, ‘The fated hour was not yet come.’

Then he invited Sporus to raise the funeral wail for him. Next moment he entreated one of those present to kill himself with a dagger so as to encourage him to follow the example. This each declined to do, and gently reprimanded him for his want of courage. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘yes, I yet live, to my shame be it spoken. This is not becoming in Nero. Indeed it is not becoming, Nero! man, pluck up thy heart, be cool, man, be cool!’ mixing Greek with Latin.

As the miserable coward was thus whining, he heard the clatter of horse-hoofs along the road. True to his character, he at once fell to quoting poetry, and recited the line of Homer:—

‘The sound of swift-heel’d steeds assails my ears!’

With shaking hand he applied a dagger to his throat, but had not resolution to drive it in; he was therefore assisted by his secretary, Epaphroditus.

In another moment a centurion burst in, and found the wretched prince seated on the squalid bed, and he hastened to sop the blood with his cloak so as, if possible, to prevent Nero’s purpose from being fulfilled.

‘Too late!’ said Nero, ‘and this is your loyalty?’

Then he sank back on the bed and died, ‘his eyes fixed and starting out of his head, to the terror of all who beheld him.’

He died on June 9th, A.D. 68, on the identical day on which he had caused his wife Octavia to be assassinated.

When he died he was aged thirty years, five months, and twenty-six days, and was in the fourteenth year of his reign.

Thus perished the last of the family of the Caesars, the last of the divine Julian race. By edict of the senate his name was pronounced accursed, his decrees were effaced, his statues overthrown. With caps of freedom on their heads, the people ran about Rome, cheering, falling into each other’s arms and weeping for joy that the tyranny was overpassed.

But loving hands cared for the fallen prince. His nurses, Ecloge

and Alexandria, though he had put to death wantonly the son of one of them, and Acte, his first love, whom he had deserted for Poppaea, laid his ashes in the tomb of the Domitii, that stood at the foot of what is now called the Pincian Hill.

It would be a mistake to suppose that Nero perished unregretted. Among the people, to the last, he was popular; he gave them what they liked—shows. What cared they for the dignity of Rome? for the decimation of the nobility? Only for a moment did his popularity suffer eclipse—just before his fall, and when fallen he was bitterly regretted by the rabble. They strewed flowers about his monument, they buoyed themselves up with idle hopes that he was still alive, was in hiding, and would return to his delighted people.

Even those who had suffered from his barbarity could not realise that he was actually removed, and in the Apocalypse it is thought he is obscurely alluded to as the dreaded one, with the number of the beast, 666 (Neron Kaisar in Hebrew letters) who was to reappear, when the seven seals of the seven first Roman emperors, from Caesar to Galba, had been removed.

He was the last of the Julian-Claudian dynasty.

The last drops of the united blood of Octavius, of Agrippa, and of Livia were sopped up by the old ragged coverlet in Phaon's villa. Intermarriage had led to the natural consequences. The germs of disease that might have been dissipated by the admixture of fresh and vigorous blood were accumulated in the Caesarean stock by consanguineous marriages, till all the members to the last perished, either as madmen, or as victims to the mad fears of their blood relatives and natural protectors.

What three men of genius or ability had built up by their labour and self-control, three men in their madness or incapacity had cast down. On what lines the dictator Caesar would have planned and based the new constitution, that culminated in imperialism, we can only conjecture. His was a creative genius, and he had a far-seeing eye. But he was not suffered to do much more than clear the ground and lay the first stones. The daggers of Brutus and Cassius though aimed at the heart of Caesar were of fatal import to Rome herself. That work which Caesar alone among men was capable of effecting by his wondrous constructive abilities was left to be accomplished at haphazard under Augustus. This latter was endowed with cleverness, not with genius, and he suffered the constitution of the new imperialism, forced on by the exigencies of the situation, to shape itself. He followed, no doubt, after a fashion, the scheme of Julius Caesar, as far as he was acquainted with it, but there is little evidence that he put his hand vigorously to work to reconstruct the Roman State on a clearly defined plan. As it emerged into shape it was rather the product of a series of compromises.

Tiberius endeavoured honestly to carry out this compact of compromise made by Augustus with the senate and the people.

The fatality which cut away the props of the dynasty one after another left Tiberius finally alone, and what seems to have been an integral element of the scheme failed. Augustus had secured the succession of the son of Livia by associating him with himself in the government, so that there might be no break in the continuity, no excuse for a *pronunciamento* of the army, or for the formation in the senate of factions advocating rival candidates, who would plunge the commonwealth in civil war. But when Tiberius lost Germanicus, then his own son Drusus, next the elder sons of Agrippina, he was left unsupported. There was no one but the truculent Caius who could succeed, and him Tiberius would not associate with himself in power during his life, knowing the mental obliquity of Caius. Perplexed and irresolute he doubted what to do; by retiring from public life he, perhaps, hoped that the senate would buckle to its task, develop administrative powers, and prove a workable machine capable of carrying on the government and of checking the caprices of Caius. But the senate, which may be said to have had everything in its hands on the retirement of Tiberius, proved its incompetence. It had lost cohesion, and was resolved into an arena in which the rival aristocratic families, envenomed by jealousy, fought each other. Patriotism was dead. Each family strove for its own advancement, and sought it by the destruction of its rivals in wealth and power.

Tiberius was a man void of initiative ability. When the system of family props failed, he was incapable of devising something to take its place. He saw the dangers in store, but how to avert them he saw not. He despaired of the future, whereas a man of genius would have addressed himself to securing it. In hesitation, feeble as well as foolish, he died, seeing no alternative save the surrender of the throne to one or other of two boys equally incompetent to fill it. Caius succeeded, a mere boy, mad with conceit, and with a disordered brain, and speedily threw all into confusion. When he perished by the sword of a soldier, the nomination to the throne passed to the soldiery. The feebleness of Claudius made him accept the purple from the praetorians, and the youth of Nero unsuited him for association with the prince in his old age in the cares of government. Thus Nero came to the throne inexperienced in the art of government.

Had Nero been a man of sound brain and moral force, he might have recovered the principate from the dangers that menaced it. But he, like Caius, was insane, and the power to make and unmake princes fell altogether into the hands of the soldiery.

Herod had accepted the homage that was due to God alone, and was smitten with corruption. So also did Augustus accept divine honours; so, but with regret, once did Tiberius; so frankly, defiantly,

did Caius and Nero, and so languidly did Claudius. And the house that exalted itself to heaven was smitten down and extirpated to the last member.

One of the most instructive lessons taught us by the story of the early Caesars is the difficulty, the impossibility of establishing a moral law without religion. In the midst of the general decay of the moral sense, Augustus cast about for some means whereby to regenerate Rome after the ancient pattern of high honour, moral purity, and severe simplicity. He tried to restore the old healthy tone of the early Republic by enactments, but law could not effect what he desired. He appealed to patriotism; he appealed to the antiquarian sense, and then, when these proved inadequate, to religion. But religion was dead, it was without moral force; it was a sentiment, a superstition; it was no revelation. It came up out of man, but it came not down to man. In his own household Augustus endeavoured to revive the type of the ancient Roman life of simplicity and moderation, and failed utterly. No vague sentiment for the past could control the fiery Julia, no patriotism sober the princes Caius and Lucius drunk with flattery.

Tiberius, as well as Agrippina, would gladly have had the sons of Germanicus grow up self-restrained, dignified, and virtuous,—but the motives for a high life were wanting, ambition was the sole incentive to integrity that they could suggest, and that failed. The only means of keeping them from open and scandalous vice was to enclose them within walls beyond the reach of temptations they did not care to attempt to resist. What guarantee did that offer for their future when invested with power?

We find Agrippina the Younger desperately striving to bring up her son in the ways of sobriety, manliness, and virtue. She gave him the best teacher Rome then knew, Seneca. She set him the example of her own grave, strict, and simple life. But what availed her example? What the maxims of Seneca as constraining bonds on the boiling passions of youth, and the intoxication of despotic power? What indeed was the only basis of morality Seneca could lay? The personal Dignity of Man. But the stoic philosophy taught that man was an integral part of the Universe, governed by the inexorable decrees of Fate. The doctrine of the stoic could not support the moral fabric he endeavoured to rear on it, nay—it subverted all moral responsibility. There were then, as now, those unconscious of their personal dignity; and of such was Nero. There were others, natural prigs, and stoicism did no more than exhort men to be prigs for priggishness-sake. Seneca, therefore, could in his day give the young Nero nothing really sounder than what the father of Horace had given his son in the early days of the empire. Horace, with self-complacency, speaks of the moral training afforded him by his father, who had pointed to the broken fortunes and battered reputations of the dissolute and extravagant. It was like



bringing up a boy of the present age on the *Police News* and the society papers. But Horace's father had nothing else to give his son as a principle, as a law of life; and Seneca had nothing better to give to Nero—the one motive too poor to restrain Horace from the worst vices of that corrupt age, the other too weak to hold back Nero from dipping his hands in the blood of his mother.

Not till Juvenal, in his grand thirteenth satire, did men sound a solid bottom, and not till the torch of Christianity was held aloft was the conscience enlightened and instructed.

Every motive for a good life had been suggested, and none had succeeded save in a few individual instances: patriotism, antiquarian sentiment, love of popular applause, ambition, self-respect. None had proved cogent enough to hold mankind in the ways of temperance and justice. This was fully realised at last. What had failed in the family of the Caesars failed in every household. In the distress of men seeking for a basis of principle on which life might be ruled, Christianity found the minds of men ripe for its reception.

That at last was given without which the world had staggered on from lapse to lapse, in growing doubt and yet eager desire—a revealed moral code tough enough to restrain passion, lofty enough to raise man to look God face to face, sharp enough to carve and shape his heart and mind, and strong enough to transform and regenerate society.

#### XI.—PORTRAITS OF NERO.

1. A youthful bust in harness at Florence, No. 70. Conjectural, but probable.

2. Another, colossal, in the Capitoline Museum, in the Imperial Gallery, No. 15.

3. Another, with whiskers, in the Palatine collection, No. 17, the pleasantest in expression of all.

4. Bust with 'Newgate collar,' in the Capitoline Museum, No. 16. Much broken, but judiciously restored. (Fig. 114.)

5. Bronze head in the Vatican Library, bearded.

6. Bust at Naples with wreath of oak-leaves.

7. Splendid basaltic head in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, No. 65, originally intended for a statue. Bernoulli thinks—I think quite mistakenly—that it is comparatively modern. (Fig. 116.)

8. A head at Catajo, of black marble, which closely resembles the basaltic head at Florence, but with a band round the head adapted for jewels, which are, however, all removed. Because this is obviously like the Florence basaltic head, Bernoulli mistrusts its antiquity.

9. A very similar type of head, with crown of rays much like the basaltic head at Florence; on a bust in toga, in the Louvre. This was

formerly at Versailles. The toga is modern. Traces of jewels remain in the crown.

10. Youthful statue found at Gabii, now in the Louvre. The head does not belong to the statue, though also found at Gabii. On a fragment that probably belonged to the trunk is the inscription *TI·AVG*, so that the statue was originally a Tiberius, but no head of Tiberius was found with it. The head is to my mind certainly intended for Nero; it is without the fat and double chin, which came later. It is mistakenly restored with a nose after that of Tiberius, and is labelled Tiberius.

11. Head and bust in the Louvre, from the villa Borghese, with beard and moustache. (Fig. 113.)

12. Splendid head in the British Museum, from Athens. It formerly belonged to a statue. (Fig. 118.)

13. Colossal head in the Glyptothek at Munich, from the Palazzo Ruspoli.

14. Another head in the same collection, related to that in the British Museum, from the Villa Albani.

15. Head and bust in the Uffizi Palace, Florence. (Fig. 107.)

16. Youthful bust at Naples.

17. Child's head in harness, in the Vatican. Conjectural, but not improbable.

18. Bust in the Louvre (No. 2178) in Nero Antiquo, from the Campana Collection, found near the Forum, Rome, a band round the head. Nose and chin restored. Larger than life. Genuine, but not very good.

19. Porphyry head at Madrid.

20. Bust in the Louvre. (Fig. 115.)

Several cameos and intaglios, but none of very conspicuous value. The medals are numerous and good

## APPENDIX.

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### I. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EARLY PRINCIPATE.

THE exact process whereby the imperial power was built up has not been revealed to us by the historians of the period, who concerned themselves more with military achievements, or with individual portraiture than with tracing the course of the encroachments of despotism, and of noting the origin of the powers out of which the imperial supremacy of the Caesars took its spring.

The Roman Republic at the time of Julius Caesar was in a condition that could not endure the strain to which it was subjected, unless it were materially modified. It was full of discordant elements, and all principle of cohesion seemed dissolved.

The people and the senate viewed each other with hostility. The soldiery obeyed their generals, and were indifferent to the senate. The army was not an integral whole, it consisted of legions quartered in Germany, in Gaul, in Spain, in Africa, and in the East. The time was long past when the army was made up of Roman, even of Italian yeomen. The legions were composed of foreigners drawn from every race dominated by Rome, snatched from their native soil and transplanted to the other ends of the Empire. Such soldiers had no sentimental or traditional ties attaching them to Rome. They obeyed their general, partly because they were habituated by the discipline of the camp so to do, partly because they looked to the general for plunder, largess, and double pay. They were ready to follow the general sword in hand into Italy or into Armenia, or across the Channel into Britain. It was all one to them where they went, whom they slew, so long only as plenty of loot fell to their share.

The governors of provinces in command of the legions were moreover pretty much their own masters. They made wars as they listed, extorted tribute as much as they wanted, or the provincials could pay. They viewed each other with jealousy, and it was inevitable that, flushed with money and with power, they should clash in open field. It was also inevitable that they should refuse to surrender their command at the demand of a senate impotent to enforce its orders. Affairs had reached this pass, that the only manner in which the senate could exact submission was by enlisting one of its generals against another.

The priestly colleges were a power in the State that could not be disregarded. The augurs were able to neutralise legislation, to throw the whole

conduct of affairs into confusion by their hocus-pocus. That representative aristocrat of the Roman republican oligarchy, Bibulus, did his utmost by this means to neutralise the attempts of Caesar to introduce his most salutary reforms, and Caesar only succeeded by treading his protests under foot with a disregard shared by few, and those only the most free from superstition.

The censorship, though its powers had greatly declined in the late Republic, was another important office. The censor determined the qualifications of those who aspired to enter the senate, and was also empowered to winnow that august body of its unworthy members. That this power was calculated to be used for partisan purposes was undeniable.

The courts of law again were notoriously corrupt, and vain efforts had been made to purify them. They were venal and they were partisan. No redress could be obtained in them by the harrowed provincials, and the plundering governor was obliged to pay his discharge from them when the inevitable impeachment came on his return to Rome.

The date usually and justly fixed for the inauguration of the imperial system is Jan. 13, 727 (B.C. 27), when Augustus resigned the temporary and extraordinary powers wherewith he had been invested, and proposed thenceforth to exercise rule on a strictly legal and constitutional basis.

The wiser heads in Rome had seen that a concentration of the several powers, civil, military, and sacerdotal, in one hand, was the only alternative to the ruin of the commonwealth through internecine strife of rival generals, the inroad of barbarians and the revolt of the provinces. And this is precisely the solution of the problem offered by Augustus. He did not aim at being a despot, but at knitting together the unravelled skeins and consolidating the republic which was falling to pieces.

The imperial power was founded on two assumptions or rather concessions: the one was the investiture of the prince with the *imperium proconsulare*, the other, the investiture with the *tribunicia potestas*.

Every provincial governor exercised the *imperium*, the sovereignty, in his province, and with that sovereignty had control over the military there stationed. The prince by his acquisition of the *imperium majus* obtained superior sovereignty over all the governors and provinces, or we may put the matter in another way, the power of the proconsuls and propraetors was reduced, and subjected to the supremacy of the holder of the *imperium majus*. The emperor was now the head of all the forces in every province, the sovereign authority over all the provinces was intrusted to him, and he could protect the governed against the rapacity of their governors. The soldiers were required to take oaths of allegiance to the prince; he alone had the right to raise troops. He appointed all officers, and conferred all military decorations—saving and excepting triumphs and the triumphal insignia. He moreover paid the soldiers through his pay-masters. Consequently privates and officers were bound to him by their oath and their interests alike. This was a most important step, and was designed to make civil war impossible, and it did prevent it till Nero, the last of the true Caesars, died. But the proconsular *imperium* gave the emperor no definite authority, conferred on him no power in Rome itself; it is moreover doubtful whether it gave him any in the Italian peninsula.

This power was accordingly supplemented by another—the *tribunicia*



*potestas*. The investment with the *imperium* established the material, the military domination of the prince ; the object of Augustus in the assumption of the tribunician power was to gain a legal position, and authority at home.

The holder of the tribunician power was invested with all the privileges enjoyed by the tribunes of the people, and with something in addition. There can be little question that one purpose of conferring the title on the prince was that he might appear as the head and advocate of the people, and inherit the favour that the people had accorded to their officers.

ἡ γὰρ τυραννὶς τῆς προστατικῆς ρίξης ἐκβλαστάνει.

The holder of this power however received it by decree of the senate, which was almost certainly submitted to and approved by the people in their comitia. The *dies imperii* rarely coincided with that on which the tribunician power was obtained. Tiberius was granted this latter in the lifetime of Augustus, and dated his reign from it, though Augustus was still alive during the earlier years of his tenure of the power.

The tribune of the people exercised his authority no further than within a mile of the walls of Rome, but the holder of the *tribunicia potestas* seems to have been enabled to exercise his throughout Italy, *i.e.* wherever he was restricted from exercise of his authority as holder of the *proconsulare imperium*. By virtue of the power conferred on him, his person was rendered inviolable : he had a right to veto any law in its passage through the senate, to convoke the senate, to exercise his *intercessio* to prevent the execution of sentences decreed by the senate or the courts of law, and the right of *prehensio*, *i.e.* of arresting any person, even a consul or a censor, and of imprisoning him.

The courts of law were three in number ; these were all independent, but the emperor had the prerogative of mercy, and was thought to exercise a preponderating influence over his own court, and that of the praetors. It was to avoid this that the senate claimed and exercised the right to try, in senate assembled, certain cases that concerned themselves.

As *princeps senatus* the emperor's relation to the senate was indicated ; as *censor* he was empowered to test the qualification of the members of that body, and to increase it at his pleasure ; as *pontifex maximus* he stood at the head of the sacred colleges.

The title whereby the historians are pleased to designate the emperor is *princeps*, and that was the title that Tiberius regarded as best representing his position. He was head of the empire, of the provinces, of the army, of the senate, and of the plebs : he was head also of the religious bodies.

The usual order in which the titles were borne was Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate (from the time of Tiberius), Imperator (from that of Claudius), Consul, Censor, etc. The prince was thus recognised in all his relations, and in every department, civil, sacerdotal, and military ; but the title of *princeps* was never assumed on coins and monuments.

The scheme proposed by Augustus and pursued by Tiberius was to make of the empire a dyarchy, the control of the provinces being divided between the emperor and the senate, that is to say, certain provinces were subject to the senate, and others to the prince. So also in the courts, the

Senatorial Court was constituted to be independent of the courts subject to the emperor. So also with the finances: some of the public money was controlled by the senate, other by the prince. So also were certain magistrates appointed by the senate, others by the Caesar. It seems to me unquestionable that Tiberius endeavoured honestly to carry out this dyarchy, and to leave to the senate its full powers within its own sphere. His retirement to Capreae, especially after the fall of Sejanus, left the senate in a position to exert its powers freely and unfettered. The senate, however, manifested its incapacity to fulfil what was required of it. There were three elements that the emperor had to conciliate: 1. the senate, 2, the people, 3. the army. By giving large nominal powers to the senate, which only its own feebleness prevented it from making very real, and by becoming *princeps senatus*, he gained the senate; by means of the *tribunicia potestas* he conciliated the people; whilst his proconsular *imperium* gave him control over the army.

Such, taken very briefly, may be regarded as a summary of the powers of the early princes, and such is an outline of the constitution of the early principate.

## II. TACITUS AND TIBERIUS.

In reviewing the case of Tiberius, as made out by Tacitus, it is essential to distinguish facts from the interpretation put on them by the historian, and genuine speeches, of which record was kept, from those put by him into the mouths of the speakers. It is necessary, above all, to be on one's guard against accepting the motives he reads into the minds of those who appear on his stage.

Once more, it is essential to understand the point of view from which Tacitus regards the Caesars, especially Tiberius; and also the character of his literary work.

With regard to his standpoint, there can be no question. He viewed the past from that of the aristocratic-republican party, and his estimate of the Caesars is unfavourable, because through them that party was deprived of its influence, power, and means of accumulating wealth. He, indeed, disclaims the intention of writing with partiality,<sup>1</sup> nevertheless his own feelings were deeply engaged, and he wrote for readers who were members of that oligarchy.

The *animus* displayed towards the Caesars is manifest from the first. He cannot mention the deaths of Hirtius and Pansa, the consuls in the campaign against Antony, without an insinuation that they were removed by Octavius, the latter by infusion of poison into his wound;<sup>2</sup> nor that of Caius without a hint that he was likewise and in like manner removed by Livia;<sup>3</sup> charges that never should have been made by a serious historian without evidence to give weight to them. Moreover, after he has allowed that the case against Piso, of having poisoned Germanicus, had broken completely down, he yet writes with the assumption that Germanicus was murdered by Piso, acting under the directions of Livia, the grandmother of Germanicus. With regard to the character of his literary work, it must be remembered

<sup>1</sup> *Ann.* i. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* i. 3.

that Tacitus wrote in a rhetorical age, and that rhetorical finish stood higher in the opinion of the cultured than historic truth.

Old writers on the art of painting give rules for the construction of a picture. The leading colours employed are to be repeated through the picture. Thus, a lady in crimson velvet must have some of the red pigment in her cheeks and lips, reflected in her hair, and reproduced in the background in sunset clouds; thereby welding the whole together into unity of tone. Tacitus observes a similar rule. His study of Tiberius is the most finished in his gallery. He has resolved to depict him in sanguinary tints, and to represent him as a sensualist. Accordingly, he introduces these colours and touches at the outset, with great skill, not because they were really to be found in the original, but because the rules of his art required it.

Thus, Tiberius no sooner appears than the first dash of the governing tint is thrown on the canvas. And because there were no facts to go upon, Tacitus puts what he requires into the talk of the people. Augustus being dead, they are supposed to say that Tiberius was chosen as successor, because the deceased prince had an insight into his sanguinary character, and thought that such a successor by contrast would enhance his own glory.<sup>1</sup> We know that the people could have said nothing of the sort, as they had had no grounds for suspecting cruelty in the shrinking son of Livia who loathed gladiatorial displays; but that mattered not to the rhetorician, he must strike his key-note which would govern the whole composition. So also with respect to the sensuality of Tiberius. The orgies of Capreae are prepared for by a touch of colour. Again, facts were lacking, and again therefore Tacitus has recourse to the popular tongue,<sup>2</sup> and represents the people as explaining the retreat of Tiberius to Rhodes, as due to his desire to indulge his base appetites in secret; whereas his real motives are obvious. The same attempt after artistic finish is observable throughout the picture. We have again and again the connecting threads picked up, touches of colour thrown in, in a manner that provokes admiration of the skill of the artist, but makes us question whether historic truth is not sacrificed to the exigencies of his art. This is specially noticeable when we come to the record of accusations, trials, and sentences. And then we are able, by means of the facts given, in a measure to judge whether the governing statement that introduces them is justified.

Again, in art, it is permissible to reduce such features as do not assimilate with the picture, or such as militate against its completeness as schemed by the painter. There can exist no doubt that Tacitus did thus deal with his facts. His intention is to paint Tiberius as a cruel despot. He introduces the record of a year's trials with a sentence in which he describes a reign of terror, then he enters into particulars, and gives such details as suit his purpose, but cuts out all detail from such cases as do not fit in with his scheme. This is very observable in his record of the years 33-35.

There were reasons why the oligarchical party should regard the first Caesars with animosity, and form about them an opinion relative to their public acts and private lives the reverse of favourable. At the close of the republican epoch, the senate was the administrative power, though the legislative was still nominally in the hands of the people in their comitia. The *imperium*, with military force at its back, was held by the

<sup>1</sup> *Ann.* i. 4. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* i. 4.

governors of provinces, who were also commanders of the legions stationed in those provinces. Material power was therefore in the hands of those who commanded the legions in Gaul, in Africa, and in Asia, and between such as stood at the head of the greatest number of legions, rivalry leading to civil war was certain to ensue. And this civil war was also certain to continue till one among these governors had mastered the others. It had been so from the time of Sulla and Marius to that of Octavius and Antony, a period of half-a-century. This had become so obvious that the whole body of the Roman people, noble as well as populace and army, had acquiesced in the elevation of one man to be *princeps*, head of the commonwealth, both military and civil, as the only condition of escape from civil war and proscription. But when a new generation arose that knew not the horrors of that epoch of fratricidal carnage, there sprang up a sense of regret at the loss of power and independence among the nobility, and resentment against the Caesars who monopolised the sovereign *imperium*. This feeling of resentment went back to the earliest period of the principate, and enveloped Augustus.

But towards Tiberius the sense of dislike was still more pronounced, and rose into acts of hostility. With the exception of the conspiracy of Sejanus, all those attempts at revolt against Tiberius which were made during his principate originated among the oligarchy. One principal reason for this animosity lay in the protection he afforded the provinces against their extortions. If he could not find an honest man in the ranks of the aristocracy to fill an important place, he did not scruple to select one from among the knights. It was thus that Curtius Rufus rose to the praetorship under Tiberius, and Sulpicius Quirinius, 'not allied at all to the patrician family of the Sulpicii,' became his faithful servant, and Lucilius Longus his confidant. Under the republic appointments to provinces were for a year or two only, and each noble when he entered on a province set at once to work like a horse-leech to suck its blood, then, when gorged, he fell off and made way for another. But Tiberius not only sometimes appointed governors from the equestrian class, but he also maintained the same men in their proconsulates and propraetorships for a great many years,<sup>1</sup> and bade them remember that their duty was to shear and not to flay their flocks.<sup>2</sup> Formerly the provincials had no redress against their torturers. But under Tiberius, again and again the governors who had acted tyrannically were brought to justice;<sup>3</sup> and even when the prince was in failing health and at an advanced age, the complaint of the Jews against Pilate met at once with redress.

Under the republic the courts were so corrupt, that the nobles, with their long purses and powerful influence, were able to direct the judgments in their favour. It was no longer so under Tiberius. Without interfering with the magistrate who presided in court, he sat in a corner, listened to the trial, and by his presence prevented the miscarriage of justice.<sup>4</sup> And when a magistrate was convicted of receiving bribes, he had him displaced and punished.<sup>5</sup> One might have supposed that this purification of the springs of justice would have met with commendation from Tacitus, but not so—the action of the prince affected one of the main privileges of the oligarchy,

<sup>1</sup> *Ann.* i. 80.

<sup>2</sup> *Suet. Tib.* 32; cf. *Tacit. Ann.* iv. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ann.* i. 74; *ibid.* 66, 70; iv. 13; 15, 19, vi. 29. *Plin. Hist. Nat.* xix. 110.

<sup>4</sup> *Suet. Tib.* 33; *Tacit. Ann.* i. 75.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* vi. 31.



and was therefore condemned by him. The temper with which the historian regards the trials of noble personages is abundantly manifest in his pages. He condemns the prince for suffering those who were of illustrious families to undergo the penalties legally incurred by their scandalous crimes.<sup>1</sup>

Another reason for the formation of an opinion disadvantageous to Tiberius, was that the *optimates* had deluded themselves into believing that Drusus, the brother of Tiberius, and his son Germanicus, entertained the idea of the restoration of the republic, which meant the reinstatement of the nobles in their ancient positions of profit to themselves, and independence of law.<sup>2</sup> When both were dead, the party of the nobles attached itself to Agrippina and her children, not perhaps that they expected to find in them enthusiasm for the republican form of government, but because this family was actuated by deadly animosity to Tiberius. Among the noble families there circulated numerous epigrams, bitter and scurrilous, levelled against the prince, and private memoirs in which were collected all the scandal that had been imagined by foul hearts and angry spirits against the man who held the party down. By this means a myth favourable to Germanicus was formed, investing him with attributes he certainly never had, and another myth unfavourable to Tiberius, representing him as the monster he as certainly never was.

In the time when Tacitus lived this was the recognised view relative to Tiberius and Germanicus. When, however, the historian came to write his History, he was confronted with an array of facts that did not at all fit in with his preconceived notions. He found himself obliged to admit that Tiberius had ruled well, that he was frugal, that he spent his savings, not on public shows and splendid buildings, but in relieving debtors, in assisting cities and states oppressed with calamities; that he maintained the Roman Empire in peace, checked the ambition of the generals, who would have extended the frontiers by unprofitable wars; that the provinces were brought out of a condition of depression into one of prosperity. He was constrained to allow that so long as Tiberius lived under the eyes of the Roman people, he was chaste in life, and that he loathed bloodshed; that he urged on the senate to share with him the burden of government, that he cleansed the sources of justice, that he made strenuous efforts to correct the moral tone of Roman society, both by suffering the impeachment of members of families of the highest rank, making no attempt to screen those who were related to himself; but also by removing some of the occasions of corruption of morals. The historian was further obliged to admit that so long as the prince was present in Rome, he did interfere repeatedly between the victims and their judges, on the side of mercy, and that he repeatedly took measures to check the insolence of the professional delators, and to punish them.

But Tacitus was too deeply imbued with inbred prejudice, and too well aware how to colour his book so as to find favour with the reading public,

<sup>1</sup> iii. 22, 23, iv. 29. A curious instance of the manner in which Tacitus esteemed blue blood above personal worth is that of Curtius Rufus. The historian 'blushes to relate' that he was of ignoble birth, supposed to be son of a gladiator. He stood for the quaestorship, and Tiberius, who esteemed the man for his character, gave him his vote. When he heard the sneers of the noble competitors launched against Rufus for his humble origin, he said—and the words are noble words: Curtius Rufus videtur mihi ex se natus' (*Ann.* xi. 21).

<sup>2</sup> *Ann.* i. 33.

to represent Tiberius as he found him in the official records. He must conciliate these latter with the *chronique scandaleuse* that circulated among the aristocracy.

First of all Tacitus had to form a theory which would account for the discrepancy, and then to accommodate the facts to suit this theory. The theory he adopted was that Tiberius was inherently vicious and cruel, but that he put a constraint on himself at first, and dissembled. When he left Rome his dissimulation ceased, he cast aside the mask and revealed himself in his true character as licentious and cruel. There were no tokens of cruelty, none of dissolute morals so long as Tiberius was before the eyes of the world. Prosecutions and condemnations multiplied after he had withdrawn. And when he was no longer subject to prying eyes, imagination could run riot and impute every sort of turpitude to the old man living in solitude and study.

According to the representation of Tacitus, the life of Tiberius was one of dissimulation till he reached the age of seventy-three; first, because he feared Augustus; secondly, because he feared his mother Livia; thirdly, because he feared his favourite minister, Sejanus. The theory carries absurdity on its face; nevertheless Tacitus adopted it for want of a better, and set to work to accommodate facts to fit into this theory. The manner in which he does so is more ingenious than honest.

It is not possible for me in this place to follow Tacitus step by step and expose his disingenuousness. Nor is it necessary. This has been done very thoroughly by three competent scholars, and to them I must refer the reader. To what has been by them advanced against the trustworthiness of Tacitus, and for the clearing of the character of Tiberius, it is not easy to add much.<sup>1</sup>

Though I cannot in this place follow Tacitus throughout his misrepresentation of Tiberius, I may here give a few instances of the manner in which he colours the facts he relates so as to give them the tinge required by the picture he designs to paint.

Tiberius was generous enough in cases of real need and he was able to be generous, because he was a man of simple habits, and avoided extravagance and display. Because he did not lavish his means in shows to the people, or build splendid but useless monuments for the embellishment of the city, he is charged with miserliness, and yet Tacitus is constrained to tell of the princely way in which he poured forth his savings in cases of real necessity.

He gives at length the story of M. Hortalus, a young man of rank, the grandson of the orator Hortensius, a member of the illustrious Hortensian gens, which, though originally plebeian, numbered among its ancestors a tribune of the people, and the dictator who appeased the sedition of the oppressed Commons in B.C. 286, when they seceded to the Janiculum. M. Hortensius Hortalus had fallen into difficulties, and Augustus had made him a present of a very large sum to enable him to live up to his rank. After a while he had run through this sum, and he came with his children into the senate-house, interrupting the discussions, to ask additional relief. The senate was ready enough to help the noble pauper, but Tiberius objected to the busi-

<sup>1</sup> Sievers (G. R.), *Studien zur Geschichte der Römischen Kaiser*, Berlin, 1870, pp. 1-106; Freytag (L.), *Tiberius und Tacitus*, Berlin, 1870; Stahr (Ad.), *Tiberius*, 2d ed., Berlin, 1873; and Tacitus, *Geschichte der Regierung des Kaisers Tiberius*, Berlin, 1871. I have not seen Dürr, *Die Majestäts Prozesse unter Tiberius*, 1881.

ness of the day being thus broken in upon, and also to helping needy nobles out of the public treasury. He said, sensibly enough, 'If all that are poor come hither and clamour for relief, the public funds will be exhausted.' Then he turned to Hortalus, and said, 'Augustus indeed relieved you, but that was unsolicited, and not so as to establish a precedent that you should come begging to be helped out of the treasury whenever short of funds.'

The senate was offended, and Tiberius, seeing that his view of the matter was not that of the rest, yielded so far as to grant each of the sons of Hortalus 200,000 sesterces, and as there were four of them, that amounted to a sum of about £7200. Throughout his account Tacitus shows his disgust at the prince showing so little readiness to help the noble pauper out of the state chest. And he concludes with these words: 'Nor did Tiberius ever after show pity, though the house of Hortensius was fallen into shameful impoverishment.' So that the seven thousand pounds were also speedily frittered away.

The father of this man, Q. Hortensius Hortalus, was a notoriously profligate man, as we learn from Cicero, who found him in B.C. 50 at Laodicea, living with gladiators and other low company (*ad Att.* vi. 3). Valerius Maximus also mentions him as thoroughly disreputable. The same writer speaks of one Hortensius Corbio, who is probably the same as the M. Hortensius Hortalus of Tacitus, and he was a gambler and one of the vilest of men, who had squandered his estate in brothels.<sup>1</sup> We cannot be quite certain it is the same man, but we know enough of the family to be sure that it was thoroughly disreputable.

Tacitus throws the blame of the suicide of C. Sulpicius Galba on the prince. He says: 'Caius Galba, of consular rank, upon receiving a dismal letter from Caesar, which forbade him to undertake a province, fell by his own hand.'<sup>2</sup> Galba represented an ancient family, therefore he ought to have been given a province. Provinces were given to such men of no birth as Quirinius and Rufus. But Tacitus conceals the fact which Suetonius lets escape, that this C. Galba was a spendthrift who had squandered his paternal estate; so that he sought a governorship for the replenishment of his empty pockets. Tiberius very justly refused him the opportunity.

The death of the two Blaesi is laid to the charge of the prince because he denied them the priesthood. When the coveted offices were given to others, in sullen resentment they committed suicide. The family was illustrious, a branch of the Sempronian gens. What were the reasons that actuated the prince we do not know, but it is possible enough they were well founded, as in the case of Galba. They were not impeached; they killed themselves because they were passed over in the appointments of the prince.

M. Cocceius Nerva was an eminent jurist. Tacitus tells us that in the year A.D. 33, Nerva announced his resolution to starve himself to death. 'Tiberius having heard of it, sat down beside him, required to know his motives, adding entreaties, and even admitted that it would disturb his peace of mind, and be a stain on his reputation, if the nearest of his friends should kill himself without good reason. Nerva shunned conversing on the subject and immediately began to abstain from food. *It was alleged by such*

<sup>1</sup> 'Hortensius Corbio omnibus scortis abjectiorem et obsceniorem vitam exegit: ad ultimumque lingua ejus tam libidini cunctorum inter lupanaria prostitit, quam avi pro salute civium in foro excubuerat.' (iii. 5.)

<sup>2</sup> Tac. Ann. vi. 40.

*as knew his thought* that the more he saw into the miseries of the State, the more transported he was with indignation and fear, and he resolved to die with honour unscathed.' So the death of Nerva is cast on Tiberius. However, from Dio we learn something that Tacitus has designedly suppressed, and that puts quite another complexion on the matter. In that year great distress arose in Italy owing to the condition in which debtors were burdened with charges from which they could not escape. The praetor complained in the senate of the condition of affairs, but could get nothing done to ease the debtors. In the senate sat the worst usurers who had their grip on the throats of the poor land-holders. The capitalists had called in their loans. Money was scarce. The senate passed a law requiring two-thirds of all mortgages to be on land,—so as to stimulate the transfer of landed property, and required that all embarrassed estates should be cleared within eighteen months. The object obviously was to force on a sale, that the great land-holders might complete the acquisition of all the soil of Italy.<sup>1</sup> Tiberius interfered. He saw that something must be done, and he proposed cancelling the debts. To this Nerva was opposed, as an illegal proceeding, and an act of injustice to the capitalists. The feelings of the prince were engaged on behalf of the impoverished debtors, and he persisted. Then it was that, in a sulk, Nerva killed himself. His death produced on Tiberius an effect his eloquence had failed to produce. He altered his scheme. He confirmed the senatorial decree that debts were to be regulated within a fixed term, but he emptied his own savings, from his privy purse into the banks, as a loan to the debtors, to be held for three years free of interest, to enable them to clear their estates.

These are but a few instances of the manner in which Tacitus gives a false colouring to facts, by the suppression of information which would qualify his statements. Let us now look at the manner in which he insinuates motives.

Tiberius and Livia did not attend the public funeral of Germanicus. Tacitus gives what he considers the reason. 'All knew how real was the joy, how hollow the grief of Tiberius for the death of Germanicus.' He takes as true the imaginings of the people of what they supposed passed in the mind of the prince.<sup>2</sup> 'Public lamentations Tiberius and Livia thought below their dignity, or perhaps they apprehended, that if their countenances were examined by all eyes, their hypocrisy would be detected.' Where did Tacitus discover this? In what authentic record?

In order to connect a suicide with Tiberius, and render him answerable for it, Tacitus has an ingenious method of making the man observe the demeanour of the prince and lose courage because that is threatening. In no document were the changing expressions of the countenance of Tiberius registered. For the sake of his art, Tacitus must tie his facts together with the red thread of the sanguinary purpose of the prince.

Thus Cn. Calpurnius Piso at his trial was 'mostly daunted by seeing that Tiberius exhibited no token of either pity or resentment, but remained silent and reserved, impregnable against every attempt to influence him.' So in the case of Crematius Cordus, arraigned for having in his Annals praised the murderers of Caesar. He was fallen on by delators and hauled before the senate where sat Tiberius, to hear the case and record his vote

<sup>1</sup> Tac. *Ann.* vi. 16, 17; Suet. *Tib.* 48.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 3.



along with the rest. If the judgment went against Cordus, he could then interpose his tribunician intercession. Till the sentence had been pronounced he could do nothing. That he would have done so is more than probable. He had pardoned C. Cominius Proculus for lampooning himself only shortly before, and Votienus Montanus had been banished only, the same year, for publishing calumnies against the prince; but Cordus did not wait to hear his sentence. He committed suicide. In order to bespatter the prince, who was wholly guiltless, with his blood, Tacitus makes Cordus lose heart by seeing that Tiberius listened with stern face (*truci vultu*). How could Tacitus tell what passed in the mind of Cordus, and what was the expression on the face of Tiberius?

In the case of Piso above mentioned, the *animus* of the historian is obvious. The case of poisoning against Piso and Plancina had broken down absolutely. Piso was guilty of exciting civil war, and he knew that he was guilty. The prosecutors after his death desired to fall on Plancina and her sons. To Tacitus it was infamous that Tiberius should animate the sons to defend their mother, and interfere in her behalf when, according to his own showing, Plancina and the sons were wholly guiltless.

No sooner had Tiberius established his sovereignty than the senate began to heap titles on Livia and himself. She was to be the Parent, or the Mother of her Country; he was to be known as son of Julia. Tiberius very sensibly forbade this absurd adulation. Again, later, when the Spaniards sought to pay him divine honours, he peremptorily refused them. This Tacitus represents as showing a mean spirit and contempt for fame.

When Tiberius objected to the extravagant titles of honour offered to Livia, 'he was torn with jealousy (*anxius invidia*) regarding the elevation of a woman as the depression of himself.' When Livia was ill, Tiberius visited her. They then 'lived,' says Tacitus, 'in real unanimity or dissembled hate.' His visit was but a piece of hypocrisy. When, however, she died, Tiberius, then an old man of seventy-two, and full of infirmities, did not attend her funeral; he was in Capreae, she was buried in Rome, because, says Tacitus, 'he would not suffer this event to interfere with his pleasures (*nihil mutata amoenitate vitae*). He refused to allow divine honours to her memory, saying she had herself disallowed such, but this, according to Tacitus, was 'under a pretence of moderation (*quasi per modestiam*).'

In his first year of rule Tiberius assisted at the Augustal games, as they were in honour of his deified father by adoption. But he loathed these brutal exhibitions, and it was the only time in which he endured to be present. This is not allowed to pass by Tacitus without an insinuation; and when, later, Drusus, the son of Tiberius, gave the same sort of games and showed a savage delight in the bloodshed of gladiators, 'only vulgar blood,' says Tacitus,<sup>1</sup> then his father called him to task for it. Thereupon Tacitus adds: 'The absence of Tiberius from these shows was variously commented on: by some it was ascribed to his dislike of a crowd; by others to his austere genius, and his dread of being put in comparison with Augustus, who was a cheerful spectator of such sights. But that he thus purposely furnished matter for exposing the cruelty of his son, and for exciting popular hatred against him, is what I would not believe, though this also was asserted.'

And this Tiberius, who hates gladiatorial games, and rebukes his son

<sup>1</sup> Quamquam vili sanguine.

for liking them, is the monster who throws men over the cliffs at Capreae, and has sailors at the foot of the rocks to beat them to death with oars and marlingspikes!<sup>1</sup> who draws near to Rome that he may hear of, if he cannot see, the streams of blood there flowing.<sup>2</sup> But this is not the only instance in which Tacitus contradicts himself.

At the commencement of the reign of Tiberius, Tacitus introduces a series of men who, he says, incurred the hatred of the prince, and were by him pursued with remorseless hate to their death. These are Asinius Gallus, Q. Haterius, L. Arruntius, and Mamercus Scaurus. Asinius Gallus, no doubt, was hated by Tiberius; he had cause to hate him. This man had married Vipsania, the dearly-loved wife whom Tiberius had been required by Augustus to put away; but that was not the worst. Asinius boasted that he had carried on an intrigue with Vipsania whilst she was the wife of Tiberius, and that he, not Tiberius, was in reality the father of Drusus. A greater, a more wounding insult, could not have been offered a man, and it wounded Tiberius in his tenderest feelings. But he did not use his power to avenge a private wrong. For *seventeen years* after Tiberius was invested with the principate, Asinius Gallus remained unmolested. Only then, when he became involved in the plot which had been formed against Tiberius, at the head of which were Agrippina and Nero, was he arrested, and then was allowed to remain under supervision and in restraint for over three years, without being dealt with severely. Not till A.D. 33 did Asinius die, and his death is thus recorded by Tacitus:—‘That he perished by famine was not doubted; but whether of his own accord or by constraint was held uncertain. The emperor was asked whether he would suffer him to be buried. *He blushed not to grant this as a favour, and even went so far as to express regret that a casualty should have removed the accused before he was publicly convicted.*’

Tiberius allows his deadly enemy to live for twenty years, for seventeen in the unmolested enjoyment of his wealth and honours.

L. Arruntius was regarded with suspicion and dislike by the prince. Tacitus gives the reasons; because he was ‘rich, energetic, accomplished, and in favour with the people,’ as well as because Augustus had said he was worthy to succeed him in supreme power, and would one day put out his hand to seize it.

In 32, Arruntius was charged with high treason, and was not only acquitted, but his two accusers were punished. In 15 he had been appointed to regulate the course of the Tiber to avoid floods. In 27 he was nominated to the governorship of Spain, but was not suffered to proceed to his province, for some reason not stated, and he governed it by legates. In 37, when Tiberius was in his last sickness, and as we are assured by Tacitus, without his knowledge, Arruntius was arrested on the charges of adultery and treason; he then committed suicide.

Tiberius left this man, whom he hated and mistrusted, absolutely untouched for twenty-three years.

Yet of these two men Tacitus says: ‘They were afterwards (*i.e.* after the accession of Tiberius, A.D. 14) cut off under imputations of various crimes, all concocted by Tiberius.’ That this was not the case is proved by Tacitus’s own showing.

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Tib.* 62.

<sup>2</sup> Tacit. *Ann.* vi. 39.

Quintus Haterius was another 'who excited his jealous spirit.' He was an orator. Augustus said of his eloquence that it needed a drag-chain—it not only ran, but it ran downhill. He was a systematic legacy-hunter. Tiberius not only did not molest him, but advanced him to be *consul suffectus*, and he outlived this prince, and died in extreme old age and very wealthy.

A fourth man against whom the prince is said to have borne implacable resentment was Mamercus Scaurus. Nevertheless, he took no steps against him; on the contrary, he not only appointed him *consul suffectus*,<sup>1</sup> but when he was accused of high treason in 32, stopped the proceedings; and when Aemilia Lepida, his former wife, was condemned for having tried to pass off a child on her former husband, Quirinius, he interfered on his behalf to stop the confiscation of her estate, that her property might be saved for her daughter by Scaurus.<sup>2</sup> In 34 he was accused of adultery with Livia, the daughter-in-law of Tiberius, and of having composed a lampoon against the prince. He committed suicide; his accusers were thereupon banished.

In the trial of Aemilia Lepida, Tacitus endeavours to involve Tiberius in her overthrow. This lady, allied to the imperial house, had the bluest of blood in her veins, and, therefore, enjoys the sympathy of Tacitus. She was accused of adultery and of trying to pass off on her husband, Publius Quirinius—the Cyrenius of the Gospel—a man of no birth, but of merits, a child that was not his own. The case was a painful one, and Tiberius maintained an attitude of strictest impartiality, which is thus ungraciously treated:—'It was no easy matter to discover the heart of Tiberius, with such subtlety did he blend and disguise his feelings of indignation and clemency.' He would not suffer his son Drusus to vote first, lest the sycophant senate should suppose that the vote of Drusus indicated the wish of his father as to the sentence to be pronounced. A few years later Quirinius died, and for his distinguished services Tiberius asked that he might be accorded a public funeral. This is made a matter of animadversion, 'by reason of the danger Quirinius had brought on Lepida.' As if, forsooth, an honourable interment was to be denied a self-made man because he objected to having a child that was not his own foisted on him by his highly aristocratic wife.

In Book iv. 36, Tacitus says: 'Every open delator was as one whose person was sacred and inviolable.' But Tacitus admits that, in A.D. 20, Tiberius interposed in behalf of the accused, when these wretches had got all Italy in their clutches; and how again, in 22, he checked their audacity. Also in 34, 'when opportunity offered, the delators were surrendered to vengeance,' and we know of the names of *twenty-three* of the accusers who suffered punishment, besides others unnamed, and there is hardly a case on record in which an accuser enjoyed favour from the prince, certainly not one of a professional delator receiving advancement or reward. On the contrary, it would seem as though the fact of men in good position appearing in court or in the senate as accusers, put an end to their prospects of advancement in office. It must be remembered that there was no public prosecutor in Rome. Every

<sup>1</sup> In what year is not known. Both Tacitus and Seneca speak of him as a consular.

<sup>2</sup> The history of this Aemilia Lepida is not very clear. She was the daughter of Q. Aemilius Lepidus and Cornelia. She was twice married, first (probably) to Mamercus Scaurus (*Ann.* i. 13); secondly (probably) to P. Quirinius; and was betrothed to Lucius Caesar (*Ann.* iii. 23). By Scaurus she had a daughter. Mamercus Scaurus was twice married; first to Aemilia Lepida, and, secondly, to Sextia. The order of the husbands of Aemilia is not quite certain.

citizen was entitled to lodge an accusation. In the times of the republic each aspirant after fame so began his public career. Under the principate the system of impeachment was continued, and the accusers were either those who sought to push their fortunes as public pleaders, or who endeavoured to amass wealth by securing that portion of the goods of the accused which, by law, fell to the accuser, on condemnation. Not all accusers came under this last category. The names of accusers that occur in the *Annals* of Tacitus are the following: those marked with a cross suffered death.

- Caepio Crispinus, i. 74.  
 Fulcinius Trio, + ii. 28; iii. 10; v. 11; vi. 4, 38.  
 Firmius Catus, + ii. 27; iv. 31.  
 Fonteius Agrippa, ii. 30, 86.  
 C. Vibius Serenus, + ii. 30; iv. 13, 29, 30.  
 Publius Vitellius, + iii. 10; v. 8.  
 Q. Veranius, iii. 10; xiv. 29.  
 M. Servilius, + ii. 48; iii. 22; vi. 30.  
 Ancharius Priscus, iii. 38, 70.  
 Considius Aequus, + iii. 37.  
 Caelius Cursor, + iii. 37.  
 Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus, + iii. 66; vi. 29.  
 Junius Otho, + iii. 66; vi. 47. Doubtful if same in both references.  
 Brutidius Niger, + iii. 66; *Juv. Sat.* x. 83; *Senec. Suas.* vii.  
 Gellius Publicola, iii. 67.  
 M. Paconius, + iii. 67; *Suet. Tib.* 61.  
 L. Visellius Varro, iv. 17, 19.  
 Q. Granius, iv. 21.  
 Vibius Serenus (Junior), + iv. 28, 29, 36.  
 Satrius Secundus, iv. 34.  
 L. Pinarius Natta, iv. 34; vi. 47.  
 Calpurnius Salvianus, + iv. 36.  
 L. Aruseius, + vi. 7. 40. Doubtful if same in both references.  
 M. Sanquinius, + vi. 7.  
 Domitius Afer, iv. 52, 66.  
 Publius Cornelius Dolabella, iv. 66.  
 Latinius Latiaris, + iv. 68; vi. 4.  
 Porcius Cato, iv. 68.  
 Petilius Rufus, iv. 68.  
 M. Opsius, + iv. 68, 71 (uncertain whether he fell under Tiberius or under Caius).  
 Considius Proculus, + v. 8; vi. 18.  
 Haterius Agrippa, vi. 4.  
 Caecilianus, + vi. 7.  
 C. Cestius, vi. 7.  
 Julius Marinus, + vi. 10.  
 Q. Pomponius, vi. 18.  
 Cornelius, + vi. 30.  
 Abudius Ruso, + vi. 30.  
 Caius Gracchus, vi. 38.  
 D. Laelius Balbus, + vi. 47, 48.



It must be borne in mind that not all of these were professional delators. Let us now see how many of these received reward or encouragement.

Fulcinus Trio pushed himself forward to accuse Cn. Piso, to the vexation of P. Vitellius, Q. Veranius, and the other friends of Germanicus who had arranged the impeachment. He received a reprimand from Tiberius, but he was afterwards forward as an accuser,<sup>1</sup> was a friend of Sejanus, and, probably through his influence, became consul in 31. Directly the vizier fell, Trio turned and thrust himself forward as an accuser of the accomplices of Sejanus. In 35, however, he was himself threatened by accusers, and committed suicide.

C. Vibius Serenus was one of the accusers of Libo, in 16. He received the proconsulship of Further Spain, but was arraigned in 23 for misconduct in his province and executed. There is some uncertainty whether the Vibius who accused Libo is the same as the Vibius Serenus who was given the proconsulate. Anyhow it is not possible to say that he was rewarded for his conduct in the accusation of Libo. The appointments at the beginning of the principate were left in the hands of the senate, and Vibius actually inveighed bitterly against Tiberius for not rewarding the signal zeal he had displayed on the occasion of the conspiracy of Libo.<sup>2</sup>

P. Vitellius and Q. Veranius for having prosecuted Cn. Piso in 20 were rewarded with the praetorship, as a concession to the excited feelings of the partisans of Agrippina. Though Vitellius attached himself to Sejanus, he received nothing further, and was accused and fell in 31. He was no common delator like Fulcinus Trio.

Junius Otho had been a schoolmaster, he was praetor in 22, when he appeared as accuser of C. Silanus for his misconduct as proconsul of Asia. There was no question of the guilt of Silanus, and Otho was quite justified in impeaching him. He was advanced to be Tribune of the people in 37, and interposed his intercession when Acutia was accused of high treason. 'This,' says Tacitus, 'was the cause of his destruction,' but gives no particulars. The writer of the notice in Smith's *Biographical Dictionary* thinks that this was not the same man as the praetor in 22.

Satrius Secundus was one of the accusers of Cremutius Cordus in 25. He attached himself to Sejanus, but when in 31 during his consulship the favourite resolved on the assassination of Tiberius and Caius, and on seizing the principate for himself, Satrius betrayed the plot to Antonia, who informed the prince of it, and this led to the destruction of Sejanus. He was unrewarded. It is remarkable that he was unable to reach the ear of Tiberius directly. It had been the same in the case of the conspiracy of Libo. Catus the betrayer was refused admission by the prince, who also refused to act on the information forwarded to him, and it was not till afterwards on fresh information that Libo was arrested, and that on the accusation of Fulcinus Trio. It had been the policy of Tiberius at the first not to go further into conspiracies than was necessary. When the false Agrippa appeared in Italy, and at Ostia, he was seized, but 'though many of the prince's household, many knights and senators were said to have supplied him with money, and assisted him with their counsels, yet no inquiry was instituted.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Celebre inter accusatores Trionis ingenium,' ii. 28.

<sup>2</sup> iv. 29.

<sup>3</sup> ii. 40.

There is accordingly no evidence produced by Tacitus that Tiberius encouraged delators, there is a good deal to show that he not only discouraged them by denying them his favour and his presence, but that he also took active measures against them.

The delators were actuated by rancour, jealousy, and avarice ; no princely wire-puller was required to set them in motion. If those accused were nobles, it mattered nothing to Tacitus that they were really guilty, he conceived that the prince should have interfered in their behalf, and because he did not do so, he is accused of being guilty of their blood. With just as much right might the Queen of England be charged with the death of all the murderers who perish on the gallows in her reign, because she does not exercise the royal prerogative on every occasion to save them from the penalty incurred by their crimes.

Tacitus states that delatorships dated from the principate of Tiberius.<sup>1</sup> What is true is that at this epoch, it began to be practised as a system of monetary speculation. He wrote after the Domitian reign of terror, and supposed that, because there were many impeachments for high treason in the time of the earlier princes, that therefore those who brought the charges were probably acting as agents of the prince, as they had under Domitian. But not a particle of evidence is forthcoming to show that it was so : on the contrary, by Tacitus's own showing, there is much to lead us to conclude that this was not the case. There were remorseless speculators then, as there are remorseless speculators now, who cared nothing what misery and ruin they produced, so long as they were able to transfer some of the fortune of their victims into their own coffers. We will now pass from the delators to the trials and executions that are recorded as having taken place during the twenty-three years of the principate of Tiberius, and see whether Tacitus is justified in drawing the inferences from them that he does.

We will not begin the list with the year 14, because in it there were two executions but no prosecutions, and there is no evidence that either was ordered by Tacitus.

The case of Agrippa Postumus has been dealt with in the life of Tiberius in the body of this work. The other case was that of Sempronius Gracchus, who had been the paramour of Julia, and had indited the letters that had incensed Augustus against Tiberius ; Augustus had banished Gracchus to an isle off the African coast, when he discovered the immoralities of his daughter. Immediately on the news of the accession of Tiberius reaching Africa, Gracchus perished ; how, is admittedly uncertain. Almost certainly Tiberius had no hand in his death. In the first year he was most scrupulous to avoid the appearance of assumption of power, independent of what was accorded him by the senate. He was always a stickler for legal forms, and at that period would have been careful not to give an order that was not strictly within his legal power. Decius Silanus, 'who had debauched the grand-daughter of Augustus,' and had likewise been banished by Augustus, he suffered to return, and left unmolested, because, as he said, he had been deported without any trial and condemnation.

In all probability, when Gracchus heard that the man he had so deeply wronged had acceded to power, he committed suicide. Tacitus does not venture to assert that he was put to death by order of Tiberius, he contents himself with insinuating it.

<sup>1</sup> i. 74 ; ii. 27.

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15. 1. Falanius, accused of taking an actor into a club of 'cultores' of the divine Augustus, and of having sold a statue of the late prince (i. 73, Dio, lvii. 24).  
*Case dismissed by Tiberius.*
2. Rubrius, accused of having sworn falsely by the name of Augustus (i. 73).  
*Case dismissed by Tiberius.*
3. Granius Marcellus, accused of speaking disrespectfully of the prince, and of having set the statue of Marcellus above that of Caesar; and of having taken off the head of a statue of Augustus, and replaced it with one of Tiberius (i. 74. Suet. *Tib.* 57).  
*Case dismissed by Tiberius.*
- Three cases of treason, in all the prince interferes in the cause of justice and reason.
16. 4. M. Libo Drusus, accused of insurrectionary attempts. Committed suicide (ii. 27-32; Suet. *Tib.* 25; Dio lvii. 15; Senec. Sp. 70).  
*Tiberius solemnly swore that he would have pardoned Libo, had the trial come to a conclusion and condemnation.*
5. Clemens, a slave pretending to be Agrippa Postumus, and stirring up insurrection (ii. 40).  
 Executed. *No inquisition made into who were his abettors.*  
 In this year two cases of treason, one of execution.
17. 6. Apuleia Varilla, kinswoman of the imperial house, accused of scurrilous speeches against the deceased Augustus, and against Livia and Tiberius.  
*Tiberius and his mother begged that the words spoken against them might be passed over.*  
 She was then accused of adultery, and banished within a hundred miles of Rome (ii. 50).
7. Manlius, the paramour of Apuleia, was banished (ii. 50).
18. No cases.
19. No cases.
20. 8. Cn. Calpurnius Piso, accused (a) of poisoning Germanicus; (b) of having stirred up civil war. The first charge failed. Of his guilt under the second no doubt could be entertained. He committed suicide.
9. Munatia Plancina, his wife. Involved in the charge of having poisoned Germanicus.  
*Tiberius interfered to remove her from trial, the case of poison brought against her husband having broken down* (iii. 17).
10. 11. Cn. Piso and M. Piso, their sons involved in the same charges.  
*Tiberius interfered to obtain their acquittal and the mitigation of the sentence of confiscation decreed against their father's estate* (iii. 17).
12. Aemilia Lepida, accused of adultery and trying to pass off on her husband a child not his.  
 Banished. *Tiberius interfered to preserve her estate from confiscation* (iii. 22, 23; Suet. *Tib.* 49).

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21. 13. Anna Rufilla, accused of using scurrilous language.  
Imprisoned. Drusus stopped this scandal, certainly with his father's approval (iii. 36).
14. Magius Caecilianus, accused of high treason.  
Acquitted, and his accusers punished (iii. 37).
15. Caesius Cordus, proconsul of Crete. Accused of official plunder.  
Sentenced to disgorge (iii. 38. 70).
16. Antistius Vetus, accused of entering into confederacy with Rhescuporis of Thrace against his nephew Cotys, with whom he shared the kingdom. Rhescuporis treacherously murdered his nephew. Vetus, a Macedonian, was involved in this atrocious case.  
Banished to an island (iii. 38).
17. C. Lutorius (or Clutorius) Priscus, accused of reciting a poem he had composed presupposing the death of Drusus. Sentenced to death.  
*Tiberius interfered to require ten days to intervene between sentence and execution, to avoid such another miscarriage of justice*<sup>1</sup> (iii. 49-51; Dio lvii. 20, 27; Suet. *Tib.* 72; Senec. *Tran. Animae* 14.)  
In the seven years 15-21, the only cases of execution for high treason were those of the false Agrippa, and that of Luterius, which took place in the absence of the prince.
22. 18. C. Junius Silanus, accused of oppression of his province, 'violating the divinity of Augustus, and despising the majesty of Tiberius.'  
Banished; but *Tiberius interfered to mitigate the severity of the sentence* (iii. 66-69).
19. L. Ennius, accused of having converted an effigy of the prince into 'the ordinary purposes to which silver is applied.'  
*The case stopped by Tiberius* (iii. 70; Dio lvii. 24).
23. 'On a sudden Tiberius began to tyrannise, or encourage and support others in tyrannical proceedings' (iv. 1).
20. C. Vibius Serenus, proconsul of Further Spain, accused of oppression in his province.  
Banished (iv. 13).<sup>2</sup>
21. 22. Carsidius Sacerdos and C. Sempronius Gracchus accused of being in communication with the enemy of Rome, Tacfarinas.  
Both acquitted (iv. 13).
23. Lucilius Capito. Imperial procurator in Asia, accused of oppression and ill-treatment of the provincials.  
*Tiberius, though Capito was his own domestic officer, 'with earnestness disclaimed any desire of screening him.'* Banished (iv. 15; Dio lvii. 23).
24. 24-25. C. Silius and his wife, Sosia Galla, accused of (a) treasonable correspondence with the enemy; (β) oppression and plunder of their province. The first count was abandoned. Silius committed suicide, Sosia was banished. Tacitus admits their guilt. In this trial M. Lepidus, an intimate friend of Tiberius,

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus admits that Tiberius praised M. Lepidus who advocated a milder sentence.<sup>2</sup> Tiberius did *not* interfere to screen a great rascal, although Serenus had been active in the prosecution of Libo.



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- almost certainly with his approval, moved for leniency (iv. 18-20; Vell. Pat. ii. 130).
26. L. Calpurnius Piso, brother to Cn. Piso, accused of treasonable words uttered in private, and L. Piso died whilst the case was in progress. 'Neque peractus ob mortem opportunam' (iv. 21).
27. Cassius Severus, who had been banished at the close of the reign of Augustus for abusive language, again charged with the same offence.  
Mulcted in money and sent to another island (iv. 21).
28. M. Plautius Silvanus, accused of having murdered his wife. No doubt about his guilt.  
Committed suicide (iv. 22).
29. Numantia, his former wife, accused of having used incantations.  
Acquitted (iv. 22).
30. C. Vibius Serenus, the banished pro-consul, accused of high treason, and of having endeavoured to provoke an insurrection in Gaul.  
Sentenced to death. *Tiberius interfered and modified the sentence into banishment.*
31. 32. Cn. Lentulus and Seius Tubero, two old friends of Tiberius, accused of being involved in the same conspiracy.  
Both acquitted (iv. 29; Dio lvii. 24).
33. Cn. Cominius Proculus, accused of having composed scurrilous verses on the prince.  
*Tiberius pardoned him* (iv. 31).
34. P. Suillius Rufus, accused of selling judgment in court.  
Banished (iv. 31).<sup>1</sup>
35. Catus Firmius, a delator, accused of producing a false charge against his own sister.  
Banished, but *Tiberius interfered*, and his sentence was mitigated to expulsion from the senate (iv. 31).
25. 'I have only to record cruel mandates, incessant accusations, faithless friendships, the ruin of the innocent, and the causes of their destruction, all much alike to satiety' (iv. 33).
36. Crematius Cordus, accused of having praised Brutus and Cassius in his Annals.  
Committed suicide. His books ordered to be burnt (iv. 34-35; Dio lvii. 24).
37. Sextus Marius, accused by Salvianus during the Latin feast. Accusation not specified.  
*'This prosecution was openly resented by Caesar, and was the cause of the exile of Salvianus'* (iv. 36). Case dismissed.
38. C. Fonteius Capito, pro-consul of Asia. Accusation unspecified.  
Acquitted (iv. 36).
39. Votienus Montanus, accused of calumnies against the prince.  
Banished to the Balearic isles (iv. 42; Euseb. Chron.).
40. Aquilia, accused of adultery.  
Banished (iv. 42).

<sup>1</sup> *Tiberius interfered*; owing to his having been a friend of Germanicus he was being lightly punished. Tiberius earnestly enjoined severer measures 'in the interest of the commonwealth.' Subsequent events proved that Tiberius was right in his estimate of the man.

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41. Apidius Merula, accused of refusing to swear by the acts of the deified Augustus.  
Expelled the senate (iv. 42).
26. 42. Claudia Pulchra, accused of adultery and sorceries against the prince.  
Sentenced probably to exile, and with her
43. Furnius, her paramour (iv. 52 ; Dio lix. 19).
27. 44. Quintilius Varus, accused of treason.  
Process stopped by the senate (iv. 56).
28. 45. Titius Sabinus, accused of high treason and conspiracy against Tiberius. The prince referred the case to the senate, adding his testimony that to his certain knowledge, 'Sabinus had corrupted some of his freed men, and had aimed at his life' (iv. 68-70 ; Dio lviii. 1).  
Condemned and executed.  
Consequently we have in the seven years 22-28 *one* execution for high treason.
29. 46. Agrippina, accused by Tiberius in the senate of 'haughty demeanour and a turbulent spirit' (*arrogantiam oris et contumacem animum incusavit*).
47. Nero, her eldest son, accused at the same time of gross sensuality (v. 3).  
If, as is probable, they were both engaged in a conspiracy against Tiberius, it is obvious that this accusation was couched in the most forbearing terms, and was intended as a caution to them. The senate not taking the matter up, Tiberius removed it to his own court, and both were sentenced to deportation to solitary islands where each died later (vi. 23-25).
30. (Record lost. We are able, however, to supply a list of the trials from Dio, etc.)
48. Drusus, the second son of Agrippina, who had betrayed the plans of his elder brother, was arrested and placed in confinement on the Palatine Hill. Whether there was a trial or not we do not know. Probably he was insane. He died in prison, A.D. 33.
49. L. Arruntius, an enemy of Sejanus, accused at his instigation, was discharged; certainly *through the interference of Tiberius*, as no one else would have dared to oppose the favourite (vi. 7).  
*His accusers were punished.*
50. Vallius Syriacus, the rhetorician, was put to death, as a friend of Asinius Gallus. We know no particulars (Dio lviii. 3).
31. (Record incomplete.)
51. L. Aelius Sejanus, accused of high treason and a plot to assassinate the prince and Caius, and seize on the principate.  
Executed. (Dio lviii.)
52. Curtius Atticus, one of the companions of Tiberius at Capreae, at the instigation of Sejanus before his fall, put to death (iv. 58).
- 53-55. Aelius Gallus and the younger son and daughter of Sejanus, were put to death (v. 9 ; Suet. *Tib.* 61).
56. Fufius Geminus, consul suffect, a partisan of Sejanus, probably

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- engaged in his plot, was accused and sentenced, but forestalled execution by suicide. His wife killed herself. (Dio lviii. 4, 5).
- 57-58. Eudemus and Lygdus, the murderers of Drusus, son of Tiberius, tried by him *in camerâ* and executed (vi. 8; iv. 3. 11; Suet. *Tib.* 62).
59. T. Ollius (name lost, but probably Ollius, *Ann.* xiii. 45), accused of friendship with Sejanus.  
Committed suicide (vi. 1).
60. P. Vitellius, accused by informers of offering to provide money from the exchequer over which he presided, in aid of a revolt.  
Died unsentenced (v. 8; Suet. *Vitel.* 2).
61. P. Pomponius Secundus, accused of having harboured a condemned man.  
Acquitted (v. 8).
32. 62. Junius Gallio. Expelled the senate and banished for having proposed to give to the praetorian soldiers who had served their time rank with the knights (vi. 3; Dio lviii. 18).
63. Sextius Paconianus, accused by letter by Tiberius of having been employed by Sejanus to contrive the assassination of Caius.  
Condemned (vi. 3), but escaped by turning evidence against
64. Latinius Latiaris, involved in the same conspiracy.  
Condemned, but to what is not stated (vi. 4).
- 65-66. Memmius Regulus and Fulcinus Trio. They had been consuls the preceding year and had quarrelled, and made random charges against each other. Haterius Agrippa impeached them for not prosecuting each other.  
Both acquitted (vi. 4).
67. Cotta Messalinus, 'accused of a multitude of crimes,' those specified are, having given Caius a foul nickname, and of having spoken flippantly of Tiberius and Livia.  
Convicted by the senate, he appealed to the *prince who interposed his 'intercession,'* and his accuser was punished (vi. 5, 7).
- 68-69. Q. Servaeus and Minucius Thermus, accused by C. Cestius, acting for Tiberius, of high treason (vi. 7).  
Condemned, but escaped by turning evidence against
- 70-71. Julius Africanus and Seius Quadratus.  
Sentence unrecorded (vi. 7).
72. M. Terentius, accused of friendship with Sejanus.  
Acquitted, and his accuser punished (vi. 8).  
[Sextus Vistilius, having been denied admittance to the prince's table for having spread scandalous reports relative to the moral conduct of Caius, committed suicide. Tiberius wrote to the senate to explain the cause of his death.]
73. L. Sejanus, accused of having turned Tiberius into public ridicule.  
*Tiberius interfered to have the case dismissed* (Dio lviii. 19).
- 74-78. Annius Pollio, Appius Silanus, Mamercus Scaurus, Aemilius Scaurus, Calvisius Sabinus, Vinicianus Pollio, accused of high treason (vi. 9).

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Appius and Calvisius acquitted. *The rest discharged at the intervention of Tiberius.*

79. Vibia, mother of Fufius, accused of having wept for the death of her son. So says Tacitus, but we may strongly suspect that he is not telling the whole truth.  
Sentenced to death (vi. 10).
- 80-82. Geminus, Pompeius, and Julius Celsus charged with conspiracy. Probably this Geminus was a son of Fufius Geminus, or a brother, and there is probably some connection between the accusation of Vibia and his arraignment.  
Celsus committed suicide, the other two were executed.<sup>1</sup>
83. Rubrius Fabatus, accused of desertion to the Parthians (vi. 14).  
Acquitted.
- 84-85. Vesularius Flaccus and Julius Marinus, spies of Sejanus, were tried by Tiberius in his own court, and sentenced to death. In all probability they had been engaged in the plot to assassinate the prince and Caius.
33. 'The whole band of accusers broke loose upon those who increased their fortunes by usury.'
86. Considius Proculus, accused of high treason.  
Executed (vi. 18).
87. His sister, Sancia, banished.
- 88-92. Pompeia Macrina, and other members of her family, accused of heresy, the unauthorised worship of Theophanes, an ancestor, of whom a medal exists with the title *θεός* on it, attributed to Theophanes.  
Two were punished, probably banished, 'Argolicum, Laconem, Caesar adflixerat.'  
Pompeia was banished, and two committed suicide. An odd case, about which we do not know enough (vi. 18).
93. Sextus Marius. Accused of incest.  
Executed (vi. 19).
94. Asinius Gallus died in prison of old age or privation. He had been involved in the conspiracy of Nero and Agrippina, but had not been tried and condemned. He had been committed to the care of a magistrate, who was responsible for his production when required for trial.
95. Plancina, 'prosecuted for notorious crimes.'  
Committed suicide.  
Of the ten cases in this year, two were punished with death, but one was for an infamous crime. It is significant that Tacitus omits to tell us anything about the only case of capital sentence for high treason. We may suspect that it was richly deserved.
34. 'At Rome, the destruction of her citizens continued without intermission' (vi. 29).
96. Pomponius Labeo, accused of maladministration of his province,

<sup>1</sup> Apparently these cases, five in all, added to that of Fufius Geminus and his wife in 31, have been magnified by Tacitus into a clean sweep of the adherents of Sejanus who were in prison (vi. 19), and Suetonius has further exaggerated this into twenty executions in one day.



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committed suicide, as did also his wife, who was not accused (vi. 29; Dio lviii. 24).

97. Mamerus Aemilius Scaurus, accused of adultery with Livia, daughter-in-law of Tiberius, and of having composed a pasquinade against the prince.

He and his wife, who was not accused, committed suicide together. His delators were banished (vi. 29).

98. Lentulus Gaetulicus, accused of having been a friend of Sejanus.

Acquitted. *Tiberius intervening*, and his accusers were banished (vi. 29).

The 'destruction of citizens' in this year resolves itself into two guilty men committing suicide, and two sentimental ladies doing the same, and several delators being banished.

35. 'Tiberius, not so far appeased by time, supplications, and glut of blood,' continues his remorseless tyranny (vi. 38).

99. Fulcinius Trio, under threat of accusation by informers,—

Committed suicide, 'weary of life' (vi. 38).

100. Granius Marcius, accused of high treason,—

Committed suicide (vi. 38).

101. Tarius Gratianus, accused of high treason. No particulars of this case given.

Executed (vi. 38).

102. Trebellienus Rufus, accused of high treason. No particulars given.

Committed suicide (vi. 39).

103. Sextus Paconianus, a second time accused. Was executed in prison for having there composed a pasquinade against Tiberius (vi. 39). Probably the Paconius of Suet. *Tib.* 61).

36. 104-105. L. Aruseius and another (Sanquinius). Charge not stated, or lost from the fragment of Tacitus. But we learn elsewhere that they had been false accusers of L. Arruntius in A.D. 30.  
• What their present accusation was we do not know.

Both executed (vi. 40).

106. Vibulenus Agrippa, no charge specified. Sentenced to death; committed suicide. It is significant that Tacitus, who gives full particulars of the death, is silent relative to the crime laid to his charge (vi. 40; Dio lviii. 21; Suet. *Tib.* 61).

107. Tigranes (v.), of Armenia; never recognised by his subjects; for some reason or other was impeached and executed.

108. Aemilia Lepida, widow of Drusus, son of Germanicus. She had been seduced by Sejanus, and was now charged with adultery with a slave. 'Nor was there any doubt about her guilt.'

She committed suicide (vi. 40).

It is remarkable that in this year, though four executions are recorded, yet we are not informed of the crimes for which those who perished were accused. Had the charges been for high treason, surely Tacitus would have said so.

37. 'At Rome were sown the seeds that were destined to yield a harvest of blood after the decease of Tiberius' (vi. 47).

109. Acutia, widow of P. Vitellius, charged with high treason.

Condemned, probably to banishment (vi. 47).

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37. 110. Albucilla, widow of Satrius Secundus, 'infamous for her many amours,' was charged with adultery, and with impiety to the prince (vi. 47).

111-116. Cn. Domitius, C. Vibius Marsus, Laelius Balbus, Pontius Fregellanus, L. Arruntius, and Carsidius Sacerdos. Accused of being the paramours of Albucilla. Tiberius knew nothing of those prosecutions, as he was in his last sickness.

Arruntius committed suicide; Domitius and Marsus escaped punishment; Laelius Balbus and Sacerdos were banished; Fregellanus was expelled the senate (vi. 47-48).

117. The mother of Sextus Papinius, accused of having driven her son to suicide by her licentious conduct, was banished for ten years (vi. 49).<sup>1</sup>

Of these 117 cases there were 54 of high treason. There were from 8 to 10 of murder, 20 of adultery or other sensual crimes, and if we add the two sons of Agrippina that makes 22.

There were seven of ill-treatment of provincials and corruption of justice.

Tiberius interfered to mitigate a sentence or to pardon in 25 cases, and in the cause of justice two or three times as well. There were 36 acquittals, 23 executions in 23 years.

Tiberius himself condemned to death only seven persons. (1) The false Agrippa; (2, 3) the two murderers of his son Drusus; (4, 5) two spies of Sejanus; (6, 7) two other companions at Capreae. He also obtained the condemnation by the senate of Sejanus and Sabinus.

Some of those who come in the above list, recur, so that the number of persons tried was not so great as 117.

Freytag in his examination of the trials under Tiberius reckons them at 134 persons and 147 trials, but then he counts separately each condemnation of a delator unable to prove his case, and he adds 20 as that of the victims, names unknown and probably never recorded, in 33, when, according to Tacitus, the prince ordered the summary clearing of the prisons. To do this would have been contrary to the practice of the prince who was pedantic in his adhesion to legal forms, and neither Tacitus, nor Suetonius, nor Dio is able to give by name a single person who was thus treated.

Mr. Furneaux, in the introduction to his edition of Tacitus, is obliged to admit that the rhetorical statements of his author are not fully borne out. He accepts the 'immensa strages' of Tacitus, but is disposed to reduce the numbers to those stated by Suetonius, which is an inversion of what we have usually to do with the accounts given by that writer. Supposing that the number was twenty, he says 'when all allowance is made, probably from 80 to 100 lives in all may have perished in the six years' reign of terror.' I cannot see that there is evidence worth anything that the number was even a quarter of a hundred in the entire reign of the prince.

Mr. Furneaux goes on to say:—'Distinctions must be again drawn. Much noble and much innocent blood, no doubt (?), was shed; but much that was noble was probably not innocent, and much was neither noble nor innocent, but that of the creatures of Sejanus, who had staked their claims

<sup>1</sup> To the list may be added a certain Carnulius, of whom Suetonius tells that he was accused and committed suicide, whereupon Tiberius said: 'Carnulius has escaped me.' But, then, of this case we know nothing from other sources.

on his success. None need pity Latinus Latiaris, Vesularius Flaccus, Julius Marinus, Fulcinus Trio, or any others of the like description; nor is anything recorded even of so prominent a man as Asinius Gallus, or of many others, which would make them deserving of special sympathy.'

We come now to another consideration that tends to deepen our distrust of the representations of Tacitus. As already pointed out, the enormous majority of both trials and condemnations took place in the senate. We have indeed at the outside but seven in the court of the prince.

It is certainly significant in a high degree that not a single case of the condemnation of the innocent, not a single case of the straining of justice to effect the destruction of any man, is recorded in the praetorian courts.

Anciently the senate was not a court of justice, it heard cases exceptionally—they were such as that of the spread of the orgies of Bacchus, affecting the religion and morals of the commonwealth. Cicero indeed impeached Catilina and his confederates in the senate, and pressed for capital condemnation. Caesar contended that this was a contravention of legality, that there were the properly constituted courts to which Catilina and the other conspirators should be referred. He warned the senate against the establishment of such a precedent.

There were three judicial authorities under the principate. In the time of the republic, there had been but one, the praetorian. There were now the praetorian courts, the senate, and the court of the prince. It was thought monstrous, when, under the Emperor Claudius, Valerius Asiaticus was heard and condemned by the Emperor 'intra cubiculum' without being allowed to appeal to the senate (*neque data senatus copia*).

The criminal jurisdiction of the senate was a new thing under the principate. We have no statement as to how it came to be exercised. Probably it was part of the compromise. The prince by virtue of his tribunician power might at any time intervene and mitigate or remit a sentence of this court. The prince could assist, and both Tiberius and Claudius did assist, in the ordinary praetorian courts, and when among the jury the votes for condemnation were but one above those for acquittal the prince gave his '*calculus Minervae*' so as to balance the numbers and discharge the accused.

The senate claimed their court as that in which cases concerning their own class should be heard. They would be tried by their peers. Julius Caesar had remonstrated, in the case of Catilina, against converting the senate into a criminal court. Tiberius spoke of it as unusual, when Piso was tried before the senate. But the senate would have it so—and they suffered for so doing.

Tacitus tells us of one hundred and ten trials before the senate, with the consequences of strangulation in prison, suicide and confiscation. He tells us of no single case of the kind in the praetorian courts.

This fact in itself shows that the cause of the evils was not what Tacitus would have us believe. If senators were the victims, they fell before accusers from their own body, and were condemned by their own body, and by the officers of their own body were strangled and cast down the Gemonian stairs.

It may be admitted that the reign of terror was during the last years of the principate, but that fact tends to relieve Tiberius of the odium of having

occasioned it. It shows that directly he was removed from Rome, those elements of envy, rancour, avarice, which he had held in check, broke loose.

The glamour of the genius of Tacitus still dazzles his readers. But let the student put aside all the motives insinuated, note the reticences of the historian, observe the use he makes of the gossip of the capital, and confine his attention to the facts given, and he will probably come to the conclusion that the case of Tiberius has been grossly misrepresented.

It is remarkable how little is added by other historians and biographers. A few names of victims from the period the record of which is lost from the manuscript of Tacitus, not one from the years where that record is complete. When Tacitus speaks of those who suffered death under Augustus—he mentions ‘the (i. 10) Varrones, the Egnatii, the Iuli, put to death.’ There was but one Varro, one Egnatius and one Iulus Antonius who suffered; each is multiplied into a rhetorical plural. So for tragic effect does Suetonius deal with the facts, and no trust whatever can be placed on his statements.

One word, moreover, I may be permitted to add relative to the orgies of Capreae. The vilest, the most disgusting accusations were brought against Cicero, to his face, in the forum, by Q. Fufius Calenus.<sup>1</sup> Who believes them? no one—because we have Cicero’s own letters, and by them we can estimate his character. Fifty years after his death the same sort of stories are told of Tiberius. We have not his memoirs or his letters, and the world has believed these stories, on the *ex parte* and unsubstantiated words of political enemies. Why should they be worth more than the hateful stuff flung by Calenus at Cicero?

It is a singular fact that Tertullian, the Christian apologist, should not have shared in the traditional misrepresentation of the reserved and prudent prince; he says that Tiberius so venerated Jesus Christ, from what he heard of His life and teaching, that he proposed to the senate that He should be elevated to be of the number of the gods. The senate refused to entertain the proposal, but Tiberius would not suffer any accusations to be brought against those who were His disciples.<sup>2</sup> The statement is curious, for it shows that apart from the received opinion among the aristocratic class, there lingered on in other classes a view of the character of Tiberius in every point the reverse, so that the Christians held that he was not far from the Kingdom of God.

<sup>1</sup> Dio Cassius xlii. 1-28.

<sup>2</sup> *Apolog.* 5.



## ADDENDA ET CORRIGENDA

P. 33.—The inscription on the Madrid bust is now asserted to be modern. Not having seen this bust and examined the inscription I cannot decide. But the Apsley House bust has also his name on it.

P. 38.—The points in favour of the identification of this splendid statue with the young Caesar are these. 1. It was certainly intended as a Hermes, it had the winged cap, and the *caduceus*. 2. It was, however, a portrait of some young man with rather marked lips. 3. It belongs to the best period of Greek portrait imagery, the end of the Republic or beginning of the Augustan age. 4. It gave offence as a portrait with symbols of a god, wherefore the ears and top of head were carefully sawn away and replaced with hair, and the fingers with the *caduceus* were removed, and replaced. The replaced fingers, however, were not found. 5. In the opinion of Mr. Conrad Dressler, the face is the same in its anatomical structure as that of Caesar at an advanced age in the British Museum. 6. If it did not represent Caesar, whom else could it well represent? 7. There is the curious invocation by Horace in his second ode to Augustus, under the form of the youthful Mercury to avenge the death of Caesar, which is difficult of explanation, but which seems simple enough supposing he knew this statue.

P. 78.—Mr. Tilley in *The Classical Review* disputes this bust as representing Pompeius. The likeness in the profile to the coins is tolerably close, the same bunch of hair over the brow, the same contraction of the nostrils. In vol. I. of the *Römische Mittheilungen* of the German Institute is a head from the Jacobsen collection at Copenhagen that closely resembles the coins.

P. 113.—The bust of the Pontifex Maximus is thought by Bernoulli and by Mr. Tilley to be too aged for Julius Caesar. The bust has been mutilated, and the nose is new. I do not myself see that it is too old. The life Caesar had led in camp may have, and probably did prematurely olden him. The wrinkles and lines in this bust are the same as in the bust Fig. 23, and the formation of the mouth is certainly the same. In Fig. 23 the eyes are looking up, in 24 looking down.

There is a fine and perfect bust of Julius Caesar in the Museum at Périgueux. It is a gift from the Campana collection. The authorities at the Louvre would hardly have given it to the municipality of Périgueux had they considered it genuine. As far as I could judge, not having my collection of photographs and drawings by me, it is of the type of the Pisa bust (Fig. 9).

- P. 171.—Bernoulli and Mr. Tilley both doubt the Ceres in the Louvre being Livia, I cannot do so. Happily beside it is placed the bust of Tiberius (Fig. 61). Now I have repeatedly compared these two, looked at both from the same angles, and it seemed to me that there was as close a resemblance in the two faces as there is in the gem at Florence (Fig. 71). The manner in which the hair is worn belongs to the earliest period, and to a period at which no one save Livia would have dared to be represented with the attributes of a goddess.
- P. 176.—There is, I frankly admit, a great difficulty about identification of the portraits of Julia. There are two cameos in the Carlisle collection in the British Museum, which are thought to represent Julia, but this attribution is purely conjectural. The wonderful head (Fig. 40) belongs to an early period, just about that of the first representations of the elder Agrippina, when the fashion of hair changed, and the bunch on the forehead worn by Livia (Fig. 61), and by Octavia (Fig. 30) was abandoned. It was at a period when only such women as belonged to the imperial house were represented in statuary. Who is this woman? The effrontery, the mischief, the coarseness in her face tell for Julia. On the other hand, there is no resemblance to her father—but then, may not Julia have resembled Scribonia? At the same time—supposing Figs. 42 and 43 to be Caius and Lucius, I do see a resemblance in mouth and eyes between these boys and the woman (Fig. 40).
- P. 258, Fig. 63.—May be a Germanicus, and not Drusus Minor, whose nose was more pointed.
- P. 369, Fig. 72.—Mr. Tilley questions that this can be Agrippina Major. It is very remarkable how closely the moulding of the brow and cheekbone, and the sweep to the chin as seen from just by the left ear resembles the moulding of the same portion of the face in the coins in the Conservator's Palace. So close is the resemblance that one must conclude very near relationships, such as mother and son, or sister and brother. Judging of the age of the woman and the fashion of her hair, it cannot be the younger Agrippina, and in the face is all the character of that indomitable woman, Germanicus's widow.
- The portrait, Fig. 68, is of the same woman, but is inferior as a work of art.
- P. 447.—I more than hesitate whether this is Antonia. The fashion in which the hair is worn seems to me to be much later than her time.
- P. 527.—This interesting bust of Agrippina Minor stands in the same gallery and on the same side of the gallery as that of Agrippina Major (Fig. 72). Day by day have I gone from one to another, and examined them, and I have felt convinced that they represented mother and daughter. There is a resemblance and yet a marked difference, mainly in character and expression. Bernoulli and Mr. Tilley question the attribution of the magnificent statue

at Naples (Fig. 111). Now it must be remembered that the fashion of her wearing her hair was shared by the mother of Nero. Judging from her coins, where represented late in life, she wore a frizzly wig, and this frizzly wig appears in the statue (Fig. 111). Mr. Tilley thinks this represents too old a woman, as Agrippina was but 44 when she died. But an Italian woman at that age is old, and the life of care and anxiety Agrippina had lived must have aged her beyond her years. Mr. Conrad Dressler believed the head (Fig. 104) to be that of the same woman when young who is represented old in 111. In the one statue the lips are drawn somewhat in, as the original had lost some of her teeth. The formation of the cheek-bones is the same, so is the straight duct before the spring of the nose in both profiles, Figs. 104 and 112.

P. 610.—Bernoulli, and Mr. Tilley after him, suppose that the Basalt bust of Nero at Florence (Fig. 116) is modern. I do not believe it. The hardness of the Basalt has preserved the bust and its polish. The work is altogether too fine, and too characteristic to be modern.

P. 630, Fig. 117.—The British Museum bust is a very admirable one, and I should say without question one of the best of Nero.

THE END





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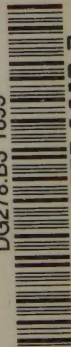
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